



SAGAMOK ANISHNAWBEK EDUCATION

CONGRATULATIONS

Supporting every Sagamok citizen to reach their full potential.



ZIISBAAKDOKE GIIZIS (APRIL) - ZAAGBAGAA GIIZIS (MAY) - WAABGONII GIIZIS (JUNE)

Niibing Edition - July 2025 - Education Newsletter

Aanii, Boozoo. Biindigen (welcome) to our Niibing (Summer) edition of the Education Newsletter.

This edition includes stories and highlights that have taken place within the Education Department from April to June. As students and staff enjoy summer break, we reflect on the productive and busy school year we have all successfully completed!

Students in Early Learning 2, Grade 8, Grade 12, and Post Secondary, embarking on a new direction of their education pathway following Graduation is a highlight! Sagamok Education extends a heartfelt congratulations to all our students for embracing opportunities to learn about themselves, their peers, and their community, while spreading their wings to soar to new heights on the path to becoming who they are meant to be. Congratulations on your many achievements throughout your education journey! And to all students who have successfully completed this school year: facing adversity, challenges, and loss; overcoming barriers and building resilience and courage; creating a stronger, unique, and impactful version of yourself. The one that only you have the power and vision to create.

We celebrate **you!**

Chi Miigwech to all our Education Staff at Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik, Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik, and the Lifelong Learning Centre. Your dedication to providing awesome learning experiences and support to students and community members with meaningful programming, training, activities, enhanced skill development, improved employment/career options, while keeping learning fun and engaging from 'cradle to elder,' is the heart of our organization. Let us also acknowledge our infrastructure team including Cooks, Maintenance, Custodial, Transportation, Groundskeepers, the Education and the Safety Committee members who work 'behind the scenes' to allow for education to take place safely and efficiently. You are all appreciated and important in your role! Miigwech everyone.

Miigwech to our parents, caregivers, and community for supporting Sagamok Education and the opportunities our department strives to bring to members. Your continued presence at school events, support of student fund-raising ventures, commitment to continued learning at home, positive engagement with students, contributions towards language and culture revitalization, and your dedication to ensuring best practices and opportunities are available to support the personal development of our students is very much appreciated. The 2024-2025 school year has been a wonderful year!

Have a safe and enjoyable summer break everyone! See you in September for the next chapter!





Table of Contents



Director's Reflection	5
Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik - Daycare ...	6
Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik - Elementary	14
Lifelong Learning Centre	45
Education Supports	66
Anishinaabemowin Language Corner	78



Sagamok Anishnawbek Education Includes and Supports the following:



**SAGAMOK ANISHNAWBEK
EDUCATION**

**Safe,
Supported
Learning
Journeys**

Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik - Daycare
Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik - Elementary
Lifelong Learning Centre
Education Supports

**Awesome
Learning
Experiences**

**Clear,
Adaptive
Processes**

**Anishinaabe
Aadziwin
Inspiration**



Director's Reflections

Vance McPherson, Director of Education

Earlier this month, the Lifelong Learning Centre, located here in Sagamok, became the first Indigenous-led training centre for mining in Canada.

Let's allow that to sink in for a minute.

The idea that education is a Lifelong – “womb to ancestry” – process is deeply rooted in the collective Sagamok psyche. For decades, community plans and visions have described a Lifelong Learning Centre – call it a Centre of Excellence, call it Sagamok College – that would help learners at any level to reach their potential.



Now, less than a year since Chief & Council approved the business case for the Lifelong Learning Centre, we have built community capacity in data sheets and dressmaking, process maps and mentorship, administration and Anishinaabemowin. Most recently, in conjunction with our Legend Mining partners, we have developed and launched in-house Surface Common Core training (required for almost every mining job) and Underground Common Core (our most popular offering yet!).

All this time, the Lifelong Learning Centre has continued to do what it, and its predecessor organizations, have always done: offered counselling, coaching, and financial support to students in secondary, post-secondary, adult education, and employment and training programs. Our Guidance and Career Coaches are familiar with all of these programs, ensuring that anyone who comes to us for support can get the support they need from the very first Coach to whom they are assigned.

It would be impossible to imagine how any of this could have happened without the tireless leadership of Claudette Jones, who has carried the monumental dual portfolio of Lifelong Learning Programs and Services for over a year. In her tenure, she has overseen significant organizational change and launched excellent programming. I am very pleased that the Lifelong Learning Centre has very quickly evolved to the point where Claudette can focus 100% of her energy on making the excellent Services that we provide even better. This year, Claudette will be investigating a new model for delivering adult education: stay tuned.

I am also excited to announce our posting for the position of Lifelong Learning Programs Manager. We are off to a great start, and there is so much more to do. By working with our own staff, developing partnerships, and dialoguing with economists and experts within and beyond Sagamok, the Programs Manager will ensure that we match the awesome potential of Sagamok Learners to the incredible opportunities available in our community through world-class education and training.

I can't wait for next year, when the Director's Reflection in the Summer Education Newsletter will describe the awesome achievements of both the Programs and the Services that we offer at the Lifelong Learning Centre.

Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik Daycare



Here are the Anishinaabemowin words that Daycare friends practiced during April, May, and June!

Ziisbaakdoke Giizis	April	Gizhebaagook	Morning
Miinaande	Blue	Giizhigat	Daytime
Miigwetch Giizhgat	Sunday	Ehbangishmok	Setting sun
Ntam Giizhgat	Monday	Zhkwaingishmok	Dusk
Niish Giizhgat	Tuesday	Memengwaan	Butterfly
Nswi Giizhgat	Wednesday	Mdaawsi Shi Ngodwaaswi	Sixteen
Niiwo Giizhgat	Thursday	Wiin Ntam	His/Her Turn
Naanoo Giizhgat	Friday	Nengaach	Slow down
Oodetoo Giizhgat	Saturday	Gindan	Read it
Ninaatig	Maple Trees	Tisge	To colour
Bneshiin	Bird	Waabaande	Grey
Gmiwan	Rain	Bdakjiigan	Fork
Waaboos	Rabbit	Pabwin	Chair
Baakwang	Easter	Noos	Father
Aki	Earth	Emkwaan	Spoon
Ogaa	Walleye	Doopwin	Table
Saawe	Perch	Miijim	Food
Waawan	Egg	Mishoomis	Grandfather
Biidaabin	First light		
Waaban	Dawn		



**DAYCARE'S
EASTER
VISIT TO
ELDERS
EAGLE
LODGE**



Daycare children and staff dropped in for a visit to the Elders Eagle Lodge on April 14th. Cupcakes were baked by EEL staff and decorating them with festive sprinkles and coloured icing was the theme of this interactive event which delighted both generations.



SHKI WAASE - AABAN BINOojiinh GAMIK'S

Social Gathering

Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik celebrated National Indigenous Day with a Social Gathering on Thursday, June 19th. One of the toddler room teachers, Heidi, organized the event that included a caterer, along with drummers and dancers from Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik. Although the plans to have the gathering outdoors came to a halt due to the rain, the gathering was successfully carried out in the Preschool classroom.

The classroom was filled with excitement and amazement as the singers began to drum and the older children danced around in their beautiful regalia. We even had some friends and teachers that wore their own ribbon skirts and ribbon shirts. Some parents and guardians were also in attendance which was very nice to see. We ended it all off with some chilli, corn soup, scone, scone dogs and fresh fruit along with some refreshments for a delicious lunch.

Photos and Story courtesy of Cassandra Toulouse



"There is boundless beauty in our culture and traditions"
– Unknown



Daycare Visits Biidaaban during Spring Transition Day



Transition Days help our young Daycare children to explore and meet staff, feeling supported and prepared when they transition to 'Big School' in September.

Roasting Hot Dogs

It was a rainy day, so we were looking forward to the warmth of a fire. The children gathered around and help place the wood so us teachers could start the fire. Then we set up our chairs around the pit. Our toddlers love roasting hot dogs. From placing the hot dogs on the roasting stick to putting ketchup on their perfectly cooked hot dog. They are always impressed with how good they can cook!



CELEBRATING

MOTHER'S DAY & FATHER'S DAY

AT SHKI WAASE-AABAN BINOOJIINH GAMIK

The Preschool and Toddler classes extended invitations out to their mother's/guardians, grandmothers, aunts or any special women in their lives to come join them for a Mother's Day luncheon on May 9th. Activities which included a spa day for the Preschoolers and some flower planting for the Toddlers began at 11:30 a.m. Both classrooms were set-up beautifully. Once the activities were done, a turkey and ham lunch was enjoyed by all who attended. A Mother's Day themed photo booth was set-up in the main hallway with a variety of different props for the attendees to use. The photos captured sure turned out spectacular. Chi-Miigwetch to all who joined us on that special day!



Article and Photos courtesy of
Cassandra Toulouse



On Friday, June 13th, both classes at Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik celebrated Father's Day with a BBQ luncheon. Both classrooms had fishing themed activities set up within their rooms that began at 11:30 a.m. Fish Batter was the main activity that the child and their guest made together. After enjoying their lunch together, the children handed out their gifts to their guest of honour. There was also a photo booth set-up in the hallway to capture those sweet memories. What a splendid way to end the week!

All families are different and unique, but they all have one thing in common - love.

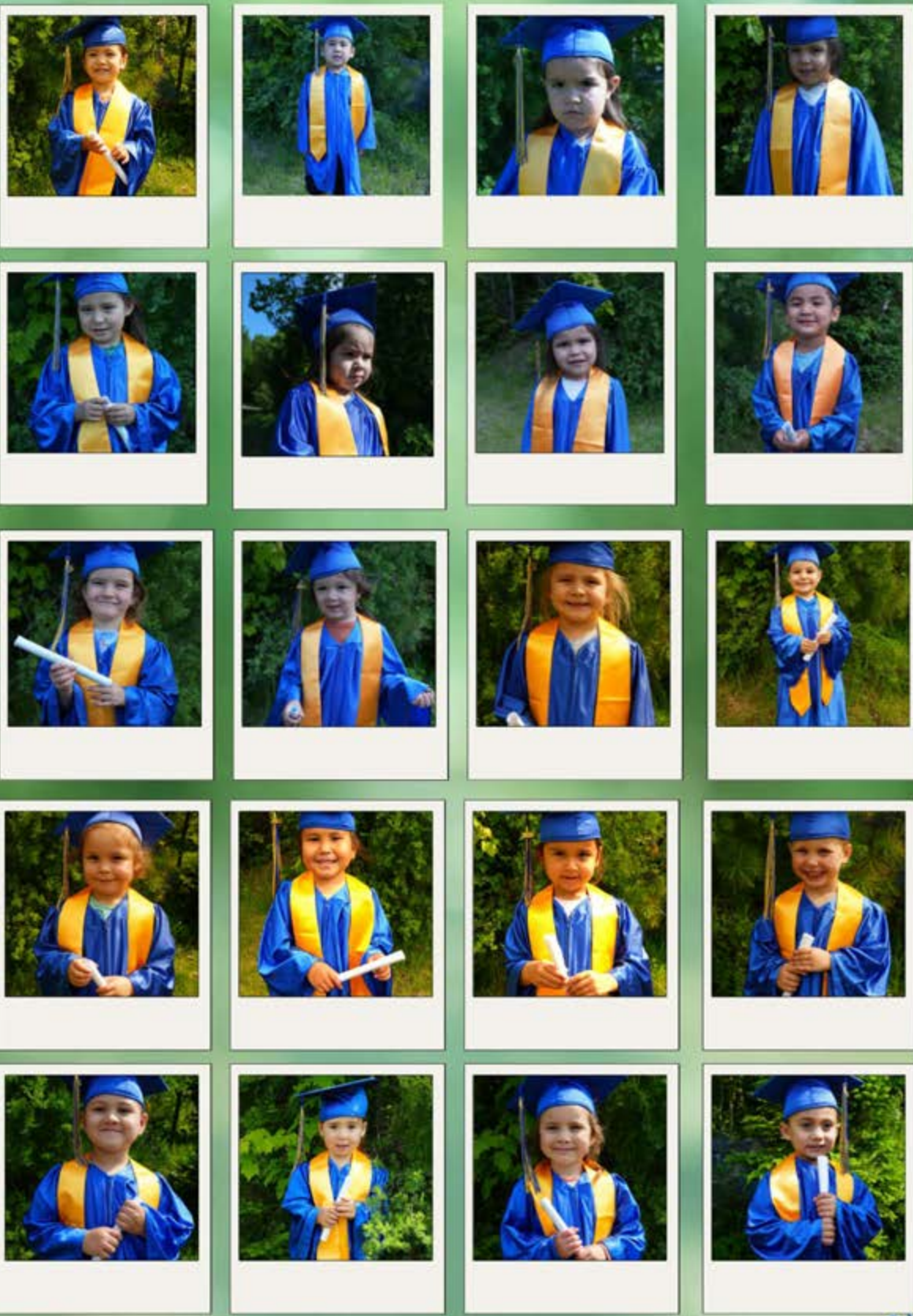
— Unknown



Created by Cassandra Toulouse



SHKI WAASE-AABAN BINOOJIIH GAMIK - DAYCARE CLASS OF 2025



At the time of print, some children's photos were unavailable due to absence.



Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik



Birthday Announcement July - August

Roshen- July 7th

Koady - July 13th

Future - July 15th

Begoneyaasan - July 20th

Mavis - July 22nd

Isabella - July 22nd

Komrey - July 29th

Jack - July 30th

Elliot - August 2nd

Elvis- August 13th

Haven - August 14th

Anakin - August 29th

Kendall - September 12th

Dawson - September 21st

Perfect Attendance

Felix (Toddler Room)

Nakoah (Toddler Room)

Saylor (Toddler Room)

Sharlee (Preschool Room)

RoShen (Preschool Room)

Isla (Preschool Room)

June's "Up and Away" Reading Program

Taron

Koady

Nakoah

Saylor

Elvis

Felix

RoShen

Finan

Kamdyn

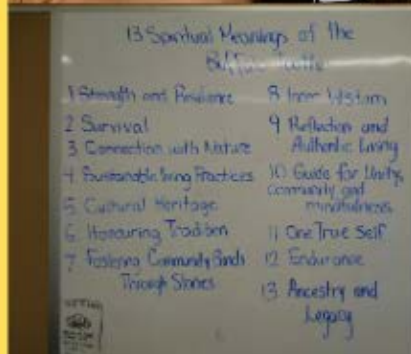
Begoneyaasan

Elliot

Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik



Buffalo Tooth Necklace Making at Biidaaban



Chess Club Awards



Mr. Johnston led a Chess Club throughout the school year, offering students a chance to learn the game of chess and to play together during lunch/recess breaks. It allowed students an opportunity to master the game and increase skills in math and critical thinking while also having fun, social interaction with peers.

On June 20, awards for varying categories of winners as well as participation ribbons were given out to competitors from the month-long tournament held in May. Students went up to receive their awards (ribbons to trophies) to the applause of fellow chess club members and a congratulatory hand-shake from Mr. Johnston.



Sagamok Celebrates Earth Day!

Mino Aki Giizghad - Earth Day April 22, 2025 - International Earth Day is celebrated by people all over the world through actions and events that remind us of the importance of protecting Mother Earth, nurturing growth of flora and fauna, planet sustainability, water and land stewardship, and being both accountable and respectful inhabitants for present and future generations. Here in Sagamok, Earth Day was widely celebrated, with people participating from every corner of the community!



Departments (3): Claims and Negotiations (*winners of a catered lunch for the team); Lands, Resources and Environment, and Z'Gmok Enterprises Inc.

Family/Friend Groups (11): Bernice Southwind (*winners of a RONA gift card), Tina Toulouse, Catherine Eshkakogan, Deanna Southwind, Tara Linklater, Corina Abitong, Marilyn Moore, Joyce Toulouse (*winners of an Ultimate Dining gift card), Trista Toulouse, Tana's Lil Picker Uppers, and Bob's!

Individuals (6): Margaret Toulouse, Bryan Assinewe, Leo Makadebin, Casey Abitong (*winner of a Poirier's gift card), Jessica Southwind, and Cindy Owl.

The morning also saw Sagamok Education's Daycare and Biidaaban staff and students participating in Earth Day through a collaborative effort between



A Community Cleanup took place in the morning. Some teams were comprised of staff, while others were friend groups and families. Everyone shared the same goal: pickup garbage to uncover the natural beauty of Sagamok's landscape and promote responsible stewardship of the land. Susan Sonnenburg, Community Wellness Worker, greeted teams at the New Community Hall, and handed out the supplies needed: gloves, bags, and garbage grippers! Teams claimed a location in the community to focus their efforts, braving the chilly morning temperatures as well as the on-and-off misty rain that so often characterizes early spring. Miigwech to the following teams for participating in the community cleanup:

Sagamok's Family and Community Support and Community Wellness Departments. Staff from both departments teamed up to develop and facilitate interactive, age-appropriate activities for Daycare friends and Biidaaban students. Daycare friends from both the toddler and pre-school classrooms, as well as Biidaaban students from Early Learning to Grade 3, had an opportunity to learn about what Earth Day means and why we celebrate it, as well as encouragement to think about how protecting the wellness of the Earth also protects the wellness of the self and brings balance.

Laura McMeekin-Clarke, Physical Wellness Worker, Toby Pickering, Family Support Worker, Darlene McNaughton, CWD Clinical Supervisor, and Raven Hammond, Children's Mental Health Worker (ages 0-18), arrived at the Daycare to start the morning off. Toby and Laura attended each classroom at Daycare, offering a 'Teddy Bear Picnic' and sing-song action dance using their very captivating speaker with built-in disco lights. They danced/ actioned out the various animals while the children mimicked their actions. "The earth consists of

In the opposite classroom, Darlene and Raven offered kits containing pea seeds and planting materials. "Just like a plant needs care, we do too!" was the idea they were sprouting in the minds of the young children. They gave some examples of healthy things children can do for themselves — get outside, get fresh air and sunshine, drink water, speak kindly to ourselves and others, offer care and attention -- as well as asking the children for ideas on healthy things they could do to care for their personal wellbeing and that of Mother Earth. Each student and staff were given an eco-friendly lunch



many different animal species each with their own distinct sounds and characteristics, so this was the emphasis of the Earth Day activities we were offering at a level appropriate to the understanding of the children," Laura shared.

box, loaded with healthy snacks, to support healthy methods of caring for self and Earth. Following that, the 'crew' headed to Biidaaban to offer similar activities to students in Early Learning to Grade 3. The Teddy Bear Picnic Lunch was offered to each of these grades and School Staff, which included the same eco-friendly lunch box, emblazoned with the Sagamok logo and containing ready-to-eat, healthy snacks like fruit, meat, cheese, and crackers. The pea seed sachets were offered to these grades with the same messages about caring for oneself and the Earth.

The morning ended with everyone gathered at Sagamok's Greenhouses, located beside the Elders Eagle Lodge, for a groundbreaking ceremony.



Laura offered a welcoming message, which was followed by a prayer and smudge provided by Wayne Southwind, Cultural Resource Worker, and finally, two songs by the Young Warriors on the drum. With the Grade 7 and 8 students included, this ceremony was a beautiful way to honour Mother Earth and signal the opening of the greenhouses for the season.



Then it was time to eat! Students walked over to the New Community Hall for a lunch of hamburgers, sausages, salads and dessert that had been catered for the senior students as well as participants from the morning's Community Cleanup and everyone involved in organizing the day's activities. By walking to and from the school, the greenhouses, and the NCH, students were given the opportunity to soak in a bit of nature along the way. With full bellies, students from Grades 4 to 8 made their way back to the Greenhouses to enjoy an afternoon of Earth Day activities. Stations included:

- Chevaun Toulouse, LRE's Environment & Climate Change Coordinator hosted a table with bat houses, bat t-shirts, and assortment of 'pollinator' seed packages for students to choose and take home to plant
- A painting/crafting station headed up by Kara Abitong, Land-Based Learning Assistant, where students painted flowerpots or

construct & decorate bird feeders

- Adam White and Angela LaChance, Greenhouse Lead and Technician, offered seedlings of tomato, pickling cucumber, and lettuce, as well as small tree seedlings along with potting soil, planter, and demonstration on how to transplant the seedlings with proper soil, fertilizer/compost agents, and care of the plant
- Discover the greenhouse and have the opportunity to job shadow what takes place here, and perhaps cultivate interest in this career path or summer job possibility



In addition to those workers named above for their specific Earth Day contributions, we'd like to give a special shoutout to Laura McMeekin-Clarke for her leadership – she was instrumental in ensuring the day ran smoothly for everyone; Michelle Toulouse for being the super-connector who brought together departments, resources, and businesses under one common goal; and Adam White and Angela LaChance for personally preparing dozens of plant seedlings and kickstarting the 2025 greenhouse season with a great day of workshops.

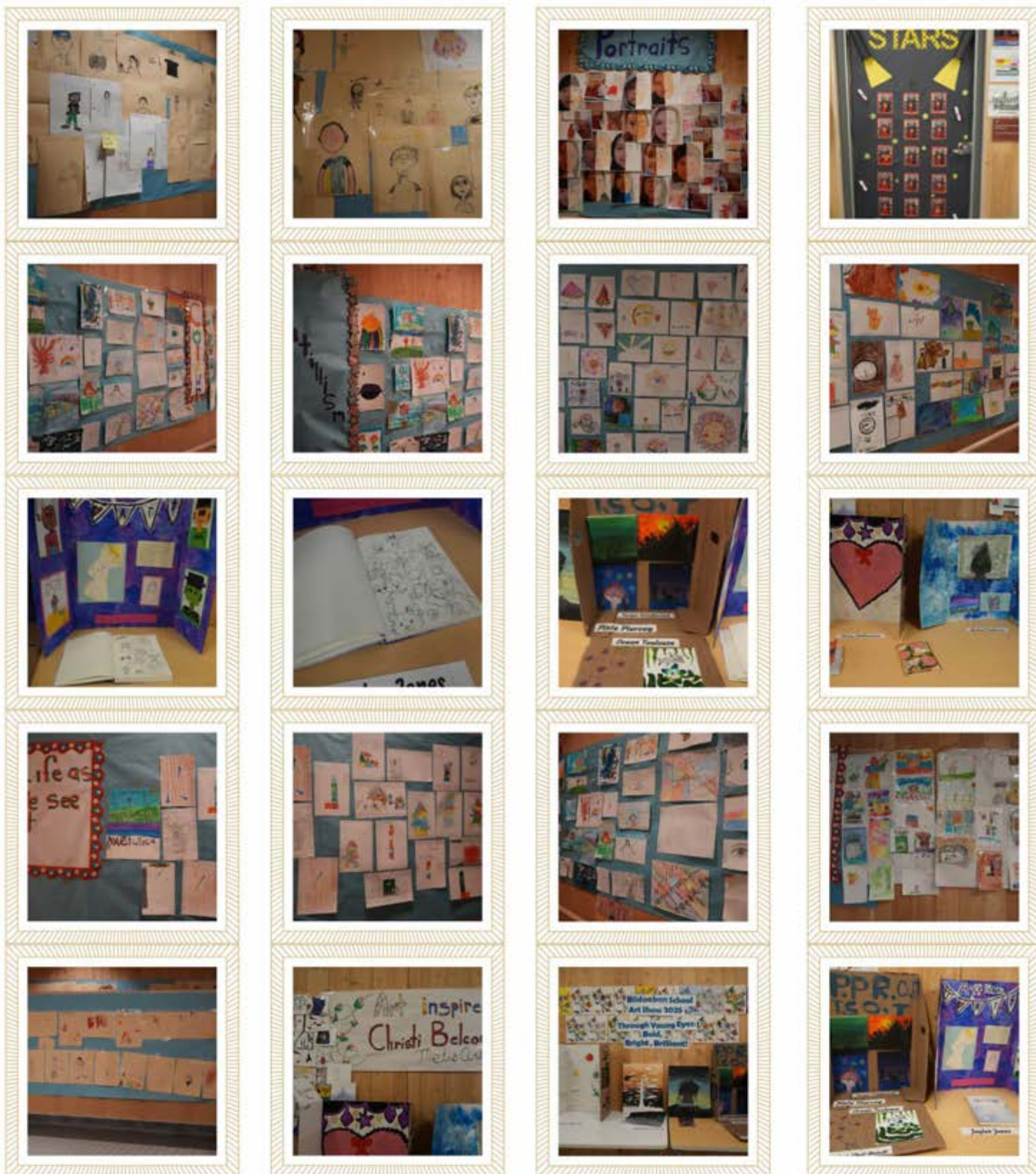
By coming together to celebrate Earth Day, Sagamok shows how powerful it can be for the community to work towards the shared goal of protecting the planet. It was a wonderful chance for people to learn, take action, and inspire each other to care for the environment. And it's never too late to get started! If you missed the community cleanup, we encourage you to gather a few friends or family members to tackle a piece of your own neighbourhood or a shared space in the community. Be sure to wear high visibility gear if you're near the road! Let's remind each other to make everyday Earth Day.





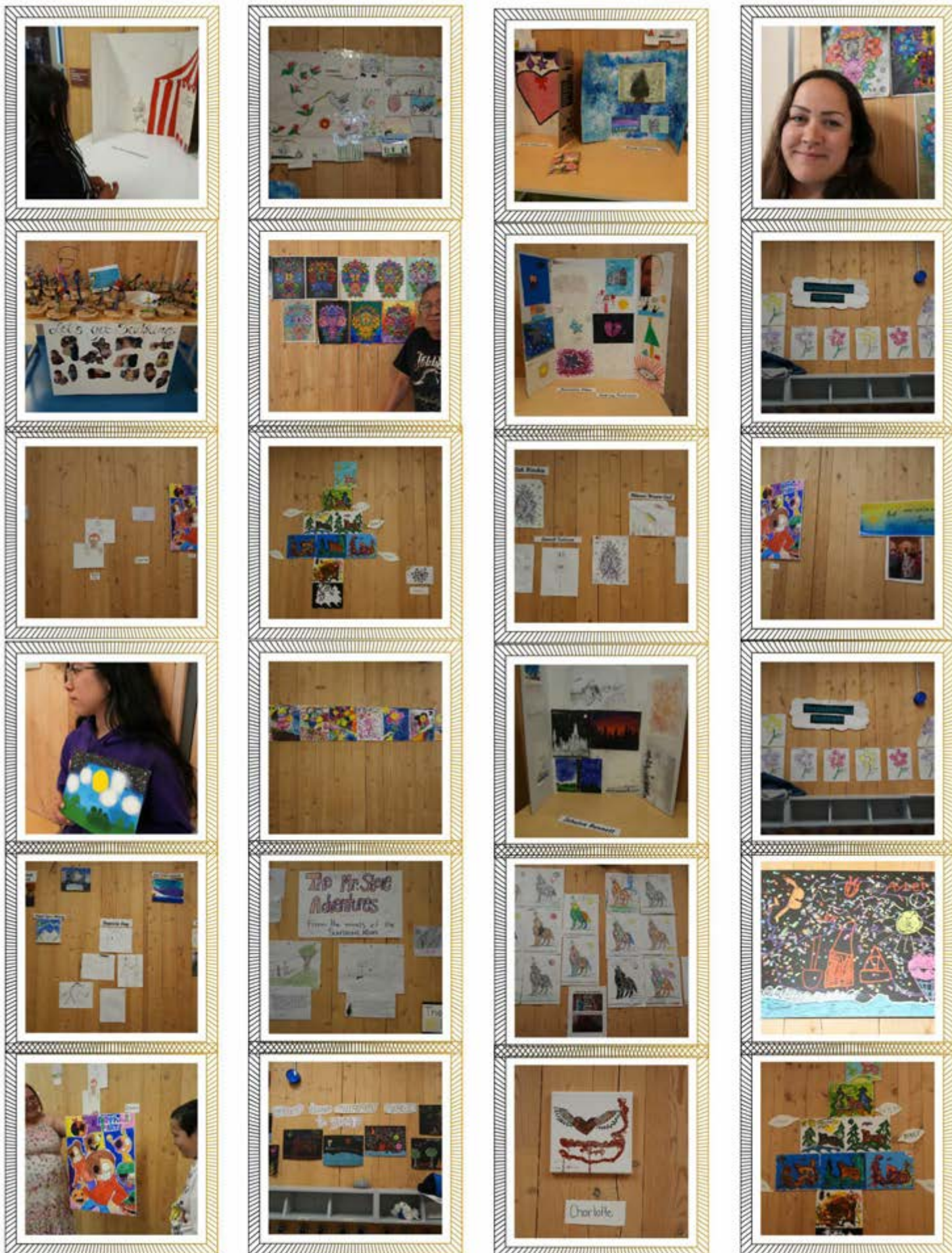
BIIDAABAN STUDENT TALENT & ART SHOW JUNE 13, 2025





BIIDAABAN KINOOMAAGEGAMIK HOSTED ITS FIRST EVER 'STUDENT TALENT & ART SHOW' ON JUNE 13, 2025! THE HALLWAYS OF 'THE NEW' BIIDAABAN WERE DECORATED WITH DISPLAYS OF STUDENTS' ART CREATIONS - DRAWINGS, SKETCH BOOKS, PAINTINGS, COLOURING, ART DISPLAY BOARDS SHOWCASING SEVERAL WORKS BY THE SAME ARTIST, TEACHER DESIGN CONTEST SPONSORED BY MR. STEVEN BENNETT, PAINTED ROCKS WITH INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES, CLASSROOM DOOR DECOR, SCULPTURES, ART REPRODUCTIONS INSPIRED BY FAMOUS ARTISTS.

A TALENT SHOW WITH STUDENTS PERFORMING SONGS, DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY, TRADITIONAL JINGLE DRESS REGALIA DANCING, COMEDY ACTS, AIR GUITAR/LIP SYNCING. TEACHERS OFFERED INSPIRATION THROUGH 'HISTORICAL' DANCE MOVES TOO! AN APPRECIATIVE CROWD APPLAUDED THE WONDERFUL ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBITING THE TALENT AND DIVERSE CREATIVITY OF STUDENTS AND STAFF. WELL DONE, EVERYONE!!





Drum Making & Birthing Ceremony



De'wegeke and Birthing Drums – not the same thing but equally special. In the Grade 8 classroom, at the beginning of June, Darren (DJ) McGregor, Andrew Commanda, and Justin Urquhart join together to share their knowledge of how to make a drum. They open the teaching with a drum song and introduce themselves and where they are from. Students are invited to introduce themselves in round table fashion, encouraged to do so in Anishinaabemowin, which some are able and confident to do. The teaching begins by students taking a look at a finished drum, learning about the history of the drum in Anishinaabe culture, and associated Anishinaabemowin words like de'wegan (drum), de'wegeke (drum making).

Next, they are invited to take tobacco and give an offering to the animal used to provide the materials for the drum. "This way the animal knows you are using it in a positive way, letting their spirit know they were used for something good," says Darren. Students will construct their own De'wegan using wawaashkesh (deer hide), which is already soaking in large buckets of water to ensure their pliability, and which has undergone ceremony to ready them for use. A rim or hoop made from cedar or oak provides the form and represents the circle of life. The lacing is about 1/2-1" wide and about 20' long, with the ends cut on an angle to form a 'needle point' used to thread through the circular hide shell and attach it to the rim. Nongo Nwii zhitoon de'wegan, or maybe you say Dewegan nwii zhitoon nongo; today I will make a drum. Unless you are on your moontime; then you are not permitted to. But that's another story that can only be shared by a woman who has the knowledge to tell it.

Students are asked to consider things they are connected to, to gather their thoughts as they prepare to make their drum so that they pour all of those thoughts and goodness into the drum. Darren points out to the students that there is a smooth side and a coarse side to the circle – you want the smooth side on top, so put the smooth side face down on the table, then lay the rim in the centre on top of the hide circle. Next, he points out a series of holes on the drum circle – two holes close together, a few inches apart from each other, to allow one lace in and one lace out. The holes appear like numbers on a clock - Darren draws on the board to demonstrate - there are 12 sets of two holes, and you need to begin lacing working from the inside to the outside of the circle.

"If you take care of your drum, it will take care of you", expresses Darren. He recalls how he started singing with the drum in 1988. He grew up in Toronto, but his Mom had grown up in Sagamok. Finding his way as Anishinaabe in Toronto was very difficult; not like Biidaaban students who are together here and supported in their community. He recalls how he met a friend at the Indian Friendship Centre in Toronto who invited him to drum. He was inspired hearing the beat of the drum even though he had never heard it before. When a baby is in the womb, it hears its mom's heartbeat. We are spiritual beings becoming a human being, (Darren shared the creation story of travellers from star realm making their way to water realm, to Mother Earth realm) so that heartbeat teaches us about that love; that first security from our mother within the womb. From there, Darren learned more about drumming through the Rain Dance, Sun Dance, and Powwow – the drum helped him learn about his identity! Drumming guided him on a life path. "If you make those positive choices, you will find the most beautiful life path you are destined for as well," shares Darren. He went on to explain how 'the first gift from Creator is our voice; it carries our thoughts and intentions and if we use it in a good/kind way, it spreads goodness. Our voice has power! When we bring our voice and the drum together, it is comforting; brings comfort too.'

As students make their drums, they listen to what is being shared and receive assistance from several helpers to continue completing their drums during the class time. By making the drum, Darren suggests that the students could always find 'home' by carrying their drum with them on their journey.

The Drum Birthing Ceremony took place at the outdoor learning tent next to Saswin, about a week after the drums had a chance to rest and dry out. The three teachers were present once again and the ceremony

was opened with prayer, song and drumming. Everyone held their drum on their lap close to their hearts. They were invited to approach the sacred fire -- burning warmly in the center of the tent with the heat and smoke escaping through the roof opening -- to pass their drum over the fire to tone and tighten the drum surface in preparation of playing it. They were given tobacco once again -- this time to sprinkle on top of their drum -- awaiting the three men performing the ceremony to come around and sing/drum over their personal drum -- causing the tobacco to bounce on the surface (birth). Berries were offered to each person to dab on the drum surface, leaving its red juice, symbolic of the heartbeat, love, and renewal of life between the physical and spiritual realms. A tobacco tie was made by each drum holder and tied to the bottom of their drum for use at a future time. The long tails of lacing leftover from the drum construction, the umbilical cord, is snipped by the drum makers. They are instructed to bury the cord in a private area, along with the tobacco pouch and a prayer. Then the drum was ready to be played by the maker! The group travelled in a circle past the three teachers, shaking hands and exiting the learning tent from the way they entered, completing the circle, and the ceremony. Lunch was enjoyed over at Saswin. Questions, discussion, and unity were on the menu, accompanied by delicious treats and a group of new members to carry on the tradition of the drum.

Regalia Making at April's PD Day!

"The focus of this Professional Development Day was providing an opportunity for staff to learn a new skill while promoting team building, sharing strengths, laughter, and building confidence. When a traditional activity of this sort is planned at the school for students, staff will be better able to assist", remarked Principal Becky Toulouse. Presenter, Marcel Toulouse, spoke about the traditional medicines, and staff were taught to make a medicine bag. Presenters, Myna and Theodore Toulouse, shared their quill knowledge assisting Staff to make medallions. Land-Based Lead, Michael Abitong, spoke about bone chokers and their significant spiritual, ceremonial, and cultural importance. Staff then had their choice to make a choker necklace or bracelet using an assortment of beads resembling the traditional bone/coloured beads used. Principal Becky commented that the day was very relaxing; great conversations and learning took place!



Biidaaban held a door decorating contest to celebrate World Autism Month (April).

Miigwech to Michelle Lajeunesse, Sunshine Room Teacher, for creating this contest and sharing the door designs. Congratulations to all Biidaaban students for gaining awareness about autism and showing support through these beautifully decorated doors! Mr. Jay's Grade 4 class was voted the winner of the door decorating contest and celebrated with a popcorn feast basket!





Grade 2 Poetry Cafe!

On April 15, in Mr. Johnston's Grade 2 classroom, students had an opportunity to present their skills at memorizing and reciting poetry to visiting family and caregivers. The students' family members had been invited to a special Poetry Café in the classroom. Students spent weeks memorizing William Blake's poem "The Tyger," which they recited aloud for parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles, with a few practice runs for good measure. What a fantastic job they did!

The Grade 2's enjoyed reading the poem aloud together - with visitors listening intently—learning to memorize and write their own poetry. "They gain confidence in writing," said Mr. Johnston, "and develop better language awareness (new words or alternative words for saying the same thing differently), spelling, and even punctuation through this type of creative learning." He encourages the use of online language learning, specifically Anishinaabemowin, and speaking with Elders at home and at school. This encourages listening to the language spoken aloud repetitively and practicing how to pronounce words using the Anishinaabe alphabet sounds and letter combinations at their own pace of understanding. As a result, online learning supports all students at whatever stage they may be at through interactive teaching and exposure. Mr. Johnston emphasizes that students are not all at the same reading or language level as their classmates; everyone develops at a different pace and in various ways. Children can discover a love for reading, improve literacy and language, and gain knowledge on their heritage through exploring interesting topics such



as animals, science, and nature, which are among the most familiar and popular subject matters for children in this age group.

Mr. Geoffrey Johnston, who proudly introduces himself as a member of the Chippewas of Nawash, explains how he introduced the class to poems and poetry – April is National Poetry Month -- recalling himself as a young boy being introduced to these same creative mediums by his father, Basil Johnston. Some may be familiar with Basil Johnston (B. July 13, 1929 – D. September 8, 2015), an Anishinaabe storyteller, published writer, language teacher, linguist, and scholar. He is a distinguished recipient of the Order of Ontario (1989), as well as the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour, Indspire award for Heritage and Spirituality, the Anskohk Aboriginal Literary Awards Lifetime Achievement Award, and honorary doctorates from Laurentian University and University of Toronto. Basil is the published author of 25 books in English and 5 in his native Anishinaabemowin in which he re-created stories from his own life experiences, and shared Anishinaabe tradition and knowledge passed on to him. He blazed the trail for writers of Indigenous content, where voices sharing these stories were



not well-known nor supported before the mid-70s when Basil gained traction. Among his favoured novels, titles such as "Moose Meat & Wild Rice", "Indian School Days", and "Honour Earth Mother" still captivate audiences today, as indicated at a recent language conference Geoffrey attended. He displayed and sold copies of his father's books and beamed proudly as he spoke about the variety and number of visitors to

his booth. They were all highly complimentary of Basil's work, asking Geoffrey numerous questions about his father's writing/literary passions, and recounting their own stories of interactions with his dad. A celebrated Indigenous author and storyteller, Basil Johnston is a person to acknowledge, value, and investigate if you're interested in Anishinaabe heritage, language, culture, and self-actualization, as well as for story time pleasure. Geoffrey suggests visiting the website highlighting his late father's work towards supporting language and language revitalization efforts, called WinterSpiritCreations.com. It's a reliable resource for audio content to listen to and practice along with and lists numerous written materials to aid in increasing native language development and cultural awareness.

Mr. Johnston summarized his endeavours to offer the Poetry Café for his class and their caregivers as a way of celebrating his father's literary legacy. He recounts that all the reading his father encouraged him to do as a young boy resulted in his own love of poetry, literature, and Anishinaabe culture. In full circle tradition, this gift is now being passed along to his students! Mr. Johnston has been teaching since 1997.



Also present at the Poetry Café, allow us to introduce and welcome Vilena Toulouse! Vilena is a Teacher's Assistant who has been present in Mr. Johnston's classroom this Spring term, through Espanola High School's cooperative education program. She expressed how much she has enjoyed her co-op placement at Biidaaban so far, and the value she has discovered in trying out the 'real job' while receiving credits toward her high school diploma. The placement lasts for one semester (four months).



"I am learning lots and enjoying it!" Vilena stated. She mentioned that when she was growing up, she enjoyed working with kids, babysitting, and more recently, volunteering as an assistant to

the Children's Wellness Program Worker (part of the CFAU) and helping to organize Sagamok's summer camp programs offered for children. Looking ahead to career aspirations, Vilena says she is looking into becoming a Social Worker focusing on working with children. Best wishes to Vilena on her path!

The Poetry Café is not the first community interactive program that Mr. Johnston has offered over the school year! He has invited family members to come into the classroom several times, building upon the core skills of arithmetic, reading, and writing. He knows these opportunities help parents see what and how children are learning at school and can help them be better equipped to support their child(ren) at home. "Participation at home by parents/caregivers helping children to do homework or furthering their learning through interactive play, games, and daily exposure to speaking, listening (being read or conversed with), or reading in Anishinaabemowin and/or English leads to more success in their education down the road and language revitalization", expresses Mr. Johnston. It builds a stronger sense of self, as well as better learning and studying habits that will serve the students well in their future school years.

Miigwech, Mr. Johnston, for once again providing a meaningful, safe, and supported learning experience for both students and community members in the classroom.



Grade 8 BBQ Fundraiser & Year-End Trip!

Biidaaban's Grade 8 Class hosted a *BBQ Lunch Fundraiser* event on May 23, with canopied tents bearing the school name set up out front of the new school. The shelters came in handy since the weather that day was not the sun as expected, but rather a full-on steady spring rain. The volunteer parents, Grade 8 students, and classroom teachers/assistants were all on site lending a hand to pull off this complex and hugely popular event. Ms. Becky, donning a raincoat, was also seen diligently ferrying BBQ lunch items into the school to feed students, while the crew also managed to prepare BBQ fare to feed the line-up of community members present, and orders from various departmental staff! Great work everyone!



The students in Grade 8 had hosted many fundraising ventures throughout the school year – all of which were wonderfully supported by family and community members; miigwech – and included operating canteens at school sporting events, bake sales, Mr. Maracle's pink hair dying challenge, and this BBQ fundraiser, which was advertised to the whole community to come out and support. The funds raised from the *BBQ Lunch* were destined to be used towards the year-end Grade 8 graduating class trip; a 5-day journey to Niagara Falls and Toronto! This group of dedicated students showed up and worked hard all year long towards raising funds to cover the costs of their amazing end-of-

year excursion, making it equitably accessible, and creating a lifetime of memories together with their peers.



The following is some of the feedback received from students and chaperones following their adventure, which included stops at Niagara Falls, Clifton Hill, the Rec Room arcade, Medieval Times, Canada's Wonderland, Ripley's Aquarium, countless food courts and restaurants enroute and much more. The trip entailed an early start from Biidaaban on the outbound day, and a late return back home. It is a long drive after all, but students were enthusiastically describing their experiences and what stood out to them and underscored that it was FUN!

Question: What was your favourite thing/part about the class trip?

- Canada's Wonderland was fun but scary - Brooklynn Toulouse
- Canada's Wonderland - the rides! - Gregory Wells
- Canada's Wonderland - the drops on the rides - Garrett Southwind
- My favourite part was CW (Canada's Wonderland) because I got to go on rides with my friends and the atmosphere was great that day - Anderson Bennett
- Medieval Times - I liked cheering and meeting new people - Aminah Boukhobza-Toulouse

- Ripley's Aquarium because of the Jellyfish and pufferfish displays! - Emily Trudeau
- Ripley's Aquarium because I loved the sharks - Sophia Toulouse
- I liked Medieval Times because the atmosphere was amazing - Stephanie Steinke (chaperone)
- I would have to say Medieval times because the food was awesome, the atmosphere uplifting and the animals were well trained. I loved getting to know the students better and become best friends with them xo - Jeannette Steinke (chaperone and number 1 EA in the world)
- My best memory of the Biidaaban school year was meeting my best friends. My fav part about the trip (year end) was Canada's Wonderland. – Brooklynn
- My fav part of the trip was Canada's Wonderland – going on the big rides for the first time. – Emmie
- It was lovely, tiring and eventful! I don't want to do it next week again, but I am already looking forward to the fun the kids will have next year!" – Mr. Maracle
- My favourite place was Wonderland and Game Room (arcade in Niagara Falls called 'Rec Room') days. – Collins
- Wonderland! – Gregory
- 1. CN Tower 2. Rec Room 3. Aquarium 4. Go Karts on Clifton Hill 5. Niagara Falls 6. Medieval Times (chicken was good! And gift shop was cool) - Lincoln

Two great success stories wrapped up in one -- celebrating the Grade 8 graduating class year-end trip *and* their fund-raising efforts and creative ideas towards achieving their goal. Miigwech to the school staff and student body, community, family, and care-givers – for supporting the Grade 8s on this positive, character building, self-actualization opportunity!



Rabbit and Bear Paws



Map App with Grade 6!

Ms. Lindsay Lefebvre, Grade 6 Teacher at Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik, recently shared a 'Map App' interactive learning journey for her students, supported by an educational tool on loan through Canadian Geographic Education, and organized by Colleen Toulouse (Sagamok Education Student Support Program Coordinator).

Lindsay described the activity with students, which started off by introducing and reading the picture book titled "The Water Walker", drawing on students' personal, and historical connection to the region. The class then went on to view a map of the Great Lakes on their classroom smartboard screen while making conversation together about their knowledge of the lakes and region.

Students were then asked to download an App called AVARA Discover to their computers. AVARA Discover App connects to a large-scale floor map. By "large-scale", we are talking "big enough to spread across a quarter of the gym floor", large-scale! The Map (meant to be walked across/on) displayed various symbols and locations around the Great Lakes region. The Map, when scanned/panned over with the users' hand-held device, displays symbols on the device screen (through the AVARA Discover

app) that then creates a virtual reality of the place where the student is standing on the map! It immediately engages to tell the listener a story about the area they are looking at/standing on and provides a visually realistic 360-degree view of what the area would have looked like in the past. Students could hear numerous stories about the history of the Great Lakes and surrounding regions, depending on what area of the floor map they were standing on or panning over with their device.

The activity offered students a fun way to absorb a geography and history lesson, and supported a hands-on, interactive learning style by enabling students to 'virtually' see the area through a historical lens and 'realistic, eye-opening' view as if they were standing there personally 'back in the day'. "It was so cool!" was the response heard from Ms. Lindsay and her students. Lindsay provided the following photos of this engaging experience and teaching moment. Miigwech for sharing this fun classroom activity with us, Lindsay, and miigwech to Colleen, for, once again, bringing a unique experience to students, promoting a deeper connection and understanding of the land, while using modern resources to support their learning.



Family Math Day!

Numeracy Resource Teacher, Mark Aizenburg, supported by Student Leadership Council members, organized a school-wide Family Math Activities Day at Biidaaban on March 26, for the first time!

Parents and Caregivers were invited into the classroom to participate in group projects involving:

- idea/concept development
- construction design
- feasibility and functionality testing of the design style
- collaboration and creating structure elements together

Students and Guardians attempted to construct a three-dimensional, free-standing structure in Ms. Kate Abitong's Grade 1 class, while bridge construction took place in Mr. Jason Solomon's Grade 4 class. Participants rolled newspapers held together with masking tape, in varying levels of compactness, to use as building materials for the structures. Popsicle sticks and adhesives were used in bridge construction projects.



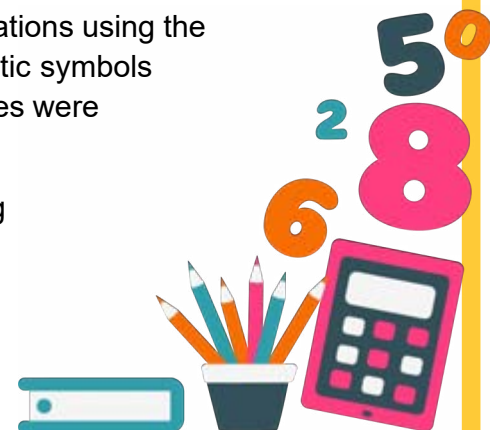
The structures were put to the test and modified as needed, helping students to learn a number of important mathematical concepts as they apply to everyday life. They also activated their sense of resourcefulness by utilizing only the tools available to them and their own ingenuity.



While mathematics was the lesson of the day, students also worked on collaboration skills, by working with community members, Guardians, and fellow classmates, along with observation and engineering skills. Working together builds self-confidence and an exchange of knowledge between parent/caregiver/peers, builds relationships, teamwork, and trust.

It was a fun and informative exercise, and some interesting structures and bridges were the result of bringing all of these components into the equation. Students had an opportunity throughout the week to visit an Estimation Station (guess how many mini chocolate bars were in the container) in their classroom, and the station was positioned at the school's entrance for visitors to also enter the contest. An alternate contest was held where students were challenged to see who could make the most math equations using the numbers 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1; digits must remain in that order, and use arithmetic symbols in between (plus, minus, multiply, divide) to create the numbers 1 to 40. Prizes were awarded to the winning individuals.

Miigwech Mr. Aizenburg and Student Leadership Council for bringing everyone and everything together for this fun day of learning; exploring Math in a new and interactive way.





CNU BRINGS BIIDAABAN UNDERGROUND!

Thursday, May 15 – Sagamok’s Claims and Negotiations Unit partnered with the Education Department to bring Biidaaban’s Grade 7 and 8 students on a field trip to Dynamic Earth in Sudbury. The collaboration was led by Mineral Development Advisor, Jordan Bennett, who after a very successful career in the mining industry, has brought his expertise to Sagamok.

Students boarded the coach bus at Biidaaban, making their way to Dynamic Earth for their tour, which started at 10am. Students were divided into two groups. While one group headed into Dynamic Earth’s underground tour, the other headed to an interactive workshop about renewable energy.

Going Underground

While everyone was getting organized, Jordan gave students an impromptu lesson from his experience working underground, including details like how the miners’ uniform has changed, now with added reflective pieces to improve visibility and the process of signing in for a shift and hanging one’s photo badge on the wall to indicate which level you’re working on in case of an emergency.

Everyone loaded into the huge elevator, “the cage”, descending about 22 meters to the educational

space designed to imitate many of the features of mining work. By comparison, the real mines in Sudbury are roughly 2.8 kilometres (or 2,800 meters) deep! First up, everyone donned a helmet. The guide encouraged everyone to try tapping into senses other than sight – feeling the cool, damp air on our noses and tracing fingers across the steep, craggily rock walls. The tour unfolded in three stages, which progressed chronologically to demonstrate mining conditions in different eras: the 1800’s, the 1950’s and present day.

At the first stop, students quickly identified a sprinkling of shiny specks amongst a big heap of otherwise dull rock. What could that be other than the presence of nickel! Three volunteers went to “work” in the 1800’s mine, holding onto various pieces of equipment that would have been used to complete the gruelling manual work of that time.



After a few failed guesses, the group learned the wages of these workers: \$2.20/day for the Drillers, \$2.00/day for the Miners, and only \$1.60/day for the Clean Up Crew. Students were shocked to learn the age requirement for mining work during this era –13 years old – close in age to many of the students on the trip! With only candles to use for light in work areas constructed largely of wood beams, and handheld dynamite used for extraction, it became startlingly clear that 1800’s mining labour was incredibly dangerous.

Moving to the 1950’s, students learned about this era of mining situated in the context of Sudbury’s



nickel boom. By this time, miners needed to be at least 18 years old. The concept of ‘workers’ rights’ was developing, so wages were up to \$2.22/hour. The group took a quick stop in the miners’ break room, which also functions as a shelter in the case of an emergency. On the table were a couple of silver metal lunchboxes. Here, students learned another significant tidbit of local history: this “Miner’s Lunchbox” was designed by Leo May right here in Sudbury. Originally called “Leo’s Lunchbox”, the container functions as both a protective container for the worker’s food, but also as a seat! Miners can take a load off while waiting for the cage without resorting to sitting on the cold, hard floor. Today, this lunchbox is used by miners around the world!

Lastly, students travelled into present day, where they were introduced to modern-day mining machinery and conditions. Importantly, many women now work in the mining industry, and the types of jobs available to all workers has expanded enormously. Land-Based Learning Instructor, Mike Abitong, quickly polled the group to see who was interested in a career in the mining industry; several hands went up. He stressed to the students that continuing their education will be critical to seeing their career aspirations become a reality. Jordan echoed this message, sharing that the higher paying jobs in mining – like the engineers working upstairs for example – require more schooling, but that everyone needs to have completed secondary school.

As the cage lifted everyone back to ground level, the students hollered a big “Miigwech!!!” to their

guide for providing such an excellent tour.

Wind Energy Workshop

During the second half of their visit to Dynamic Earth, students participated in an interactive workshop. After reviewing some of the basics of energy science, the facilitator presented the types of energy we use here in Ontario:

- Nuclear (Uranium)
- Hydro
- Wind
- Solar
- Natural Gas
- Bioenergy

Then the fun began! Each table of students worked collaboratively to put together a model windmill, that when completed, stood about 2-feet high on



the desk. Students’ natural talents and learning styles took over: while some worked methodically, evaluating each piece and asking questions about the order of assembly, others dove right in! Once their structure was sound, students attached a lightbulb to their windmill and then set out to manually push the blades of the windmill until they spun fast enough to generate energy, illuminating the light bulb. Eyes widened in awe – some at the technology itself, and others at the realization that they had in fact connected everything correctly and had engineered a working model!

When all groups were ready, students attached a voltmeter to their windmills to get a reading on the

amount of energy being generated. Again, they spun the blades by hand, mentally recording the results. As a final activity, the windmills were all tilted towards the front of the room, where the instructor used a huge fan to get the windmills really spinning! Students observed how their proximity to the fan impacted the speed with which their windmill spun, and as a result, how much energy was then generated. This demonstration allowed students to directly connect wind speed with energy output, reinforcing key concepts in renewable energy through real-time experimentation. The workshop was an awesome hands-on learning experience!



Following the underground tour and wind energy workshop, the two groups joined back together to enjoy a pizza lunch – and then it was time to load back onto the coach bus for the drive back to Sagamok. We couldn't finish the trip, however, without a group picture in front of the famous Big Nickel!!! Migwech to Jordan and the CNU for providing this incredible day of learning to Biidaaban's Grade 7 and 8 students. It was a day filled with discovery, laughter, and lasting memories—an experience that will continue to inspire curiosity and a deeper connection to science and understanding the local community.

Hoops & High Fives!

Grade 6, 7, and 8 Girls Basketball Tournament at Espanola High School

Biidaaban and area elementary schools competed in a Girls Basketball Tournament at Espanola High School on March 27.

Travelling from Sagamok to Espanola for their first game of the tournament at 9:45, the Girls Basketball Team, coached by Mr. Mark Aizenburg and Ms. Laura Poirier, arrived at Espanola High School early and ready to play ball. Basketball! Six area school teams were divided into Pool A and Pool B and games were played on half courts to accommodate all teams within the school day and consider travel time as well. Competing in Pool A was: AB Ellis (Espanola), St. Mary (Massey), and La



Renaissance (REN, Espanola), and in Pool B was Sacred Heart (Espanola), Biidaaban (Sagamok), and S. Geiger (Massey).

The games were competitive between the schools, with not much differential in score, and Biidaaban's girls team put up a great battle. Their teamwork and positive attitude on and off the court is commendable! They showed great persistence and determination, even when they fell behind

by a few points, and came back strong to close the gap quickly. Coaches encouraged from the sidelines and offered constructive feedback when needed, supporting players individually and the team as a whole. Many parents, grandmas, aunts, and community members filled the bleachers overlooking the split courts - cheering and clapping the teams onwards.



Victory is not always evident on the scoreboard alone, as we all come to understand. The opportunity to learn, play, and perfect the sport of basketball, work as a team to improve the team's success, journey to their future high school to familiarize themselves with the new environment, and meet many new girls from area schools with the same interest and love for team sports, is also a victory in and of itself!



Congratulations to the Grade 6, 7, and 8 Girls Basketball Team for representing Biidaaban and Sagamok to the best of their ability during the

basketball games; for demonstrating great spirit, sportsmanship, and collaboration; and for carrying themselves maturely and ever respectfully to each other and their opponents.

Chi miigwech, girls, for an enjoyable outing for your #1 fans, and to coaching staff for providing the hours of training, organization, and school collaboration involved to make events like this possible.



Biidaaban Junior Girls Basketball Championship!

On April 24, the Junior Girls and Boys Basketball teams hosted their first ever Basketball Tournament at the new Biidaaban school. The new gymnasium worked wonderfully for the competition and is such a positive addition to the school environment and fosters accessibility for students. Teams designated as Junior consist of students in Grades 4, 5, and 6, and three teams competed in the tournament: Shawanosowe, St. Mary's, and Biidaaban.

A huge shoutout to the Junior Girls' Basketball team, who went **"undefeated in the tournament"**, reported Mr. Aizenburg (one of the coaches for the teams)!! Congratulations to all of the players on the team for their tenacity, perseverance, and demonstration of basketball skill! The Junior Boys team played very well and fought hard but placed 3rd in the tournament.

Chi miigwech to Miss Poirier, Mr. Aizenburg, and Mr. Lester for coaching these two teams! And miigwech/thank you to the student helpers: Anderson, Brooklyn, Emmy, Gregory, and Teirney for being referees and score keepers! Without all of you offering your support and assistance, tournaments like this would not take place.

Easter Eggstravaganza!

Some sweet Easter celebrations were held April 17; an Easter Luncheon at Daycare started at 11:30am, and an Easter Formal Dance and activities at Biidaaban capped off the afternoon starting at 1:45. It was a great way to start off the Easter long-weekend break and get everyone in a celebratory mood. Staff from both locations put a lot of thought and effort into preparing activities and treats for students. Chi miigwech to our Daycare and Biidaaban leadership and staff! Your amazing, kind, and steadfast contributions to creating these meaningful opportunities for the children and their families/caregivers do not go unnoticed.

Over at the Daycare, the day was sunny and bright. We saw the first glimpse of spring warmth and promise of new, fresh growth cycles – the snowpack melting just in time for the Easter Bunny to hide some treats outdoors. Family/caregivers were invited to the Daycare for a family Easter Luncheon social event, with a child and caregiver craft and scavenger hunt prior to dining. A make-and-take Easter bucket was the interactive craft of the day. The tiny tots and their family members were encouraged to decorate their bucket with an assortment of seasonal stickers provided. This type of activity encourages children to make choices, selecting the appealing stickers and placement, and developing fine motor skills due to the coordination involved with peeling off the sticker backing and sticking it in place. The development of autonomy – choosing for oneself and creating something uniquely yours – encourages confidence and a sense of accomplishment. The decorated Easter buckets were used to gather items for the Scavenger Hunt. A game card was created by staff, and each child/family was tasked with searching to find the items in the outdoor play yard. Once children were bundled up in jackets and boots, everyone headed outside to the welcoming spring day.



Brightly coloured foil eggs were scattered around the two play areas – the smaller encapsulated yard was available for the toddlers (13-24 months) with the bigger yard for the pre-schoolers (2-4 years). Fun and recognizable items were included on the check list, such as juice box, cheese string, stuffed toy, plastic eggs, and cars/toys. Children/caregivers bustled around the game zones excitedly searching for items on their game card. They filled their cards with check marks as soon as they located each item in the grass, behind push toys, under outdoor play structures, in the sand box...you get the idea! Fun, interactive and egg-citing!

A full hot luncheon was prepared by Priscilla in the onsite kitchen. Captivating smells of bacon and scrambled eggs, salads, meats, hashbrowns, pancakes and syrup, fruit cups, Peep cupcakes and Jello, juices, milk, and yogurt permeated the senses. Guests hungrily devoured their food following the exhilarating outdoor

excursion. This Daycare community sit-down gathering was a nice, social opportunity for families to engage with each other in anticipation of Easter holidays and celebrations. Chi miigwech to everyone involved in making this a success.



The morning at Biidaaban offered senior students an opportunity to play specialized 'Indigenous Games' in the gym, organized by Kevin Lester (Physical Education Teacher) and Michael Abitong (Land-Based Lead). Students could choose to participate in various sport circuits including: tomahawk target, "hoop/stick catch", tug-of-war, and Plinko! with prizes and Anishinaabemowin fortune eggs (like a fortune cookie only the message inside was in Nish and the cookie was an Easter egg) supported by Kara Abitong, Land-Based Assistant. The students had a lot of fun challenging themselves and their peers at the various stations and competing against the teaching staff as well! It was quite a surprise for some to realize just how strong Ms. Jeanette is when she has her feet firmly planted in a game of tug-of-war! And it was no surprise that Mike's traditional bone ring toss game would be so interesting, frustrating but appealing at the same time, with students driven to succeed at snaring the hoop over the pole tip. The afternoon at Biidaaban was filled with excited students hopping around the school, giggling and getting 'dressed up' for the Easter Formal Dance. Some wore suits, frilly dresses, high heels, ties and dress shirts, fun boas, up-do's, makeup, and smiles as big as their confidence! The Grade 8's held a fundraising canteen in the hallway with lots of tasty treat options, and various classrooms/teachers were responsible for activities, including a movie, games, and arts/crafts rooms where students decorated eggs that transformed into an Easter greeting card that 'cracked open' once assembled.

The main event – a disco-light dance party -- took place in the gym for everyone to come and go from. Along with the colourful strobe lights flashing and floor fogging, the gym was decorated with a photo booth station, complete with balloon arch and streamers. Students had a blast posing for pictures with friends and siblings. The energy was high; everyone was enjoying whatever activity they chose to take part in. An impromptu visit from the life-sized Easter Bunny also put big smiles on students' faces as they greeted the Bunny in their classrooms and received chocolate treats or candies from his basket.

This was a great social opportunity for students to mix and mingle; it offered a nice change from lessons/instructing/classroom walls for staff. Based on the egg-cited shrieks and smiles, the Easter Formal Dance and Activities Day was a great success! What a fun way for staff and students to celebrate together prior to the Easter break. Chi miigwech to Biidaaban leadership and staff for supporting the students with these engaging endeavours, and for providing positive role modelling to plan, implement, and manage these memorable events for the school.



PTAG Hosts Autism Spectrum Presentation



In collaboration with the Children's Community Network and School Health Support Services, Sagamok's Parent Teacher Advisory Group (PTAG) hosted an Autism Awareness Presentation at Biidaaban on May 21. The presentation was geared towards parents, teachers and Education staff, and community members. Two sessions were held: the first was an informative session for educators following their workday, and a second from 5-7pm for community members that offered more parent/support focused information as well as 1-on-1 consultation time.

Congratulations to our evening session prize winners:

- Large houseplants: Dorothy Eshkakogan, Patricia Southwind, Barry Petahtagoose
- Hanging Flower Baskets: Alicia Toulouse, Norma Petahtagoose; and
- Our 1-on-1 Session winner of a Tablet: Kristen Wolfear



All participants received storybooks and resource materials about autism, as well as student backpacks from School Health Support Services, and self-care packages from PTAG. Educators were provided with resource books for support within their classroom.

Chi miigwech from Allison Abitong (Special Education Coordinator) School Health Support Services, Children's Community Network, and PTAG; to Colleen Toulouse (Student Support Resource Coordinator) for assisting with organizing the event; and to Becky

Toulouse, (Biidaaban Principal) for hosting this event at the school and supporting autism awareness building for Sagamok's educators and community members.

Miigwech to all parents and community members for attending the session, learning about autism, and supporting this very important presentation. It is a wonderful asset to be able to support our community, students, and families of anyone on the spectrum.





BE BEAR WISE



Bear sightings are on the rise as they search for food, especially blueberries. Most bears are simply traveling to those areas and may cross yards and roadways along the way. To prevent a bear from making a pit stop at your house, it's best to keep garbage and recycling properly secured in a bear-proof container or stored inside your house, garage, or shed.



If You Encounter A Bear...

CALL 911 OR YOUR LOCAL POLICE

If the bear poses an immediate threat to personal safety and exhibits threatening or aggressive behaviour.

CALL THE BEAR WISE REPORTING LINE

For all non-emergency bear sightings.
1-866-514-2327 or TTY 705-945-7641

More information at www.SagamokAnishnawbek.com



Walking with Nina Toulouse

For Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Day



Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Day, on May 5, 2025, also commonly known as Red Dress Day, was acknowledged by Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik through a school/community Walk initiated by Nina Toulouse. Nina's grandfather, Moses, was from Sagamok, and she has cousins and family here still. Travelling alongside Nina, to capture her Walk for a Rogers Documentary, was videographer and personal friend of Nina's, Ben Jonah.



In conversation with Nina, at Miss Vicki's over lunch, she opened up about some of her reasons behind organizing the Walk and doing the work of building awareness around MMIWG. She was first called to do this work during a difficult time following her mom's passing in 2020. In 2022, she held her first Walk for MMIWG from Junction Creek near Sudbury to Whitefish River – 100 km over 3 days. Nina was bringing her mom's spirit back home. She described how various groups came, joined, and broke away throughout the Walk; everyone was there to add support and encouragement, including two support drivers. The intention to do the Walk began with a dream her cousin had about what happened to her mom, and how they didn't get the answers they wanted; they hadn't found peace about it. They

struggled with these mixed emotions for a while and then decided they would channel their struggles/ conflict in a more spiritual way – a walk to bring awareness to MMIWG. They began with two online engagements: one at N'Swakamok Indigenous Friendship Centre in Sudbury and another on Manitoulin Island, which was conducted as a silent walk due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.



After the first two Walks, Nina moved to Algoma University. She was still grieving the loss of her mom and needed to take time to walk her healing journey. She became part of the Student Council, Shingwauk Anishinaabe Students Association, and part of the planning committee for 'Gathering at the Rapids Powwow' held in Sault Ste Marie. The Gathering at the Rapids Pow Wow includes a Red Dress Special to honor and raise awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). A march was conducted in downtown Sault Ste. Marie to bring awareness to the issue. Rather than a demonstration, the event was quiet and reflective, helping spiritually to heal loss and grief in a subtle, calm, and gentle manner. Red Dress Day is observed annually on May 5, and is a day dedicated to remembering and honoring the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

It is about the women and girls of our communities; sisters, aunties, mothers, and daughters – people we cherish and miss due to violent acts. We use this day to remember them and their spirit.



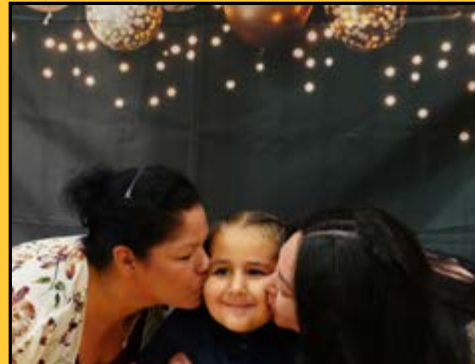
Around the time of the Sault Ste. Marie Powwow, Nina began dancing. She was gifted a red jingle dress from a lifetime friend. She described the tradition behind this special gift: you are either gifted a dress, you or someone who knows you has a dream about a dress, or you make your own. You always gift the first dress you make to someone else. Nina explains that “it is spirit directing that message to get you that [red dress]” and this is the source of her inspiration to begin dancing in the powwow circle. She also offers tobacco and respect during her Walks or dancing by asking leadership to speak or present on the territorial land she visits. She found it very moving when her brother spoke from the male perspective at one of the events she helped to organize. The messaging surrounding MMIWG is becoming more familiar and recognized.



The students and staff of Biidaaban organized themselves around a sacred fire located near the outdoor Land Based shed. Miigwech to Michael Abitong for starting and tending the sacred fire, which burns from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, sunrise to sunset, on May 5 to honour all of the women, girls, and their families. Nina played her drum and sang an honour song to commemorate the Walk and the day; a song that spirit also inspired in her. She was wearing her customary ribbon skirt bearing the red handprint, symbolic of the MMIWG movement. The entire school participated in Nina’s Walk. They left the school grounds and marched around the surrounding blocks, assisted by Fire Chief Bruce Southwind, who ensured the safety of students at the crossroads and their return to school. It was an emotionally moving day, but one that brought staff and students together and encouraged remembrance. Some students wore red, while others painted their hands red as a symbolic gesture. Painted bristol board signs were carried overhead as they walked, delivering the message that they care and will continue the efforts towards healing, remembering, and building awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



Nina said “chi miigwech” to her cousin Colleen Toulouse, and to Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik for inviting her to come to Sagamok. When the walk was complete, several people looked to the sky and saw an eagle flying over the school! It was there in acknowledgement that spirit recognizes the work being done and everyone’s participation and involvement.



EL 2 Graduation



Students in Early Learning 2 were celebrated at a graduation ceremony on June 18 at 11:00am – they will be advancing to the Primary Level in Biidaaban come September! Tables arranged in the gym were beautifully decorated with 2025 balloon centrepieces, small graduation teddy bears, and the graduating students' name plaque and photo -- all invitingly welcoming family and caregivers to gather and enjoy the celebration of their little one's graduation day. All of the families were so proud, smiling broadly, some teary eyed, but all were enthralled with the adorably clad children in red graduation caps and gowns, as they walked the red carpet towards the stage. As with the Grade 8 Graduation, the ceremony began with an Opening Prayer to start things off in a good way. Followed by a drum song, 'Teddy Bear' performed by the Girls Hand Drum group. Remarks were given by a representative from Chief & Council, the Education Director, Vance McPherson, and Principal Becky Toulouse. Certificates and Awards were presented to the students, followed up by family pictures at the Photo Booth and a delicious catered lunch. Miigwech to everyone who helped make this day special!



Congratulations to the FIRST EVER GRADUATING CLASS from the NEW Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik! 27 students walked across the stage to receive their diploma amidst cheering and clapping from proud parents, caregivers, and staff gathered to witness this special milestone. Beautifully decorated tables adorned with balloon and mini light vases, accented in red, gold and black, and a red carpet promenade captured the elegance of the spectacularly dressed Grade 8's. It was a proud moment for all to share in the glow of such a monumental achievement. These young adults will be entering high school in September, embarking upon the next phase of their journey; one that will include significant choices towards their future life paths. The Graduation Ceremony included honouring students with their diploma, the announcement of Co-Valedictorians, and the presentation of distinguished Awards, as well as speeches, words of support, and praise by Education Staff, and the presence of family, aunties, uncles, and siblings (some graduating from EL2 the same day from the same family!). Everyone enjoyed an amazing catered meal of prime rib roast beef, and a *candy bar* table! Beaming family members photographed their graduates dressed in fancy ball gowns and spiffy suits; it was a beautiful celebration! Congratulations to each of our graduates and their families for all of their efforts throughout 10 years of elementary school! To cap off the night, the graduating class received a private limousine tour from Biidaaban into Espanola with snack break stops enroute, to share one last blast of camaraderie together with a party and neon light atmosphere throughout.



Grade 8 Graduation



Family BBQ for the Last Day of School

Biidaaban hosted a Family BBQ in celebration of this year's last day of school. Heavy rain kept the event from being held outdoors as originally planned, but that didn't stop many parents, grandparents, and caregivers from joining their students at the school for a celebratory meal.



Burgers, sausages, and hotdogs – along with all the fixings – were served up to-go style from the cafeteria. Some students returned to their classrooms to eat amongst their friends, while others joined up with their caregivers and family members to enjoy lunch in the cafeteria.

The end-of-school energy was palpable! Students couldn't contain their excitement for summertime; some of the most anticipated

activities are swimming, hanging out with friends, and sleeping in! A few were spotted taking 'selfies' with their teachers, likely wanting to capture a memory with important role models in their lives.

Before and after the meal, you could see some students touring their parents or grandparents around the school. "This is the cultural room," one said proudly, tugging on his Mom's arm to make sure she was looking.

Miigwech to Biidaaban staff, who quickly pivoted to host the BBQ indoors and for serving the long and winding lineup of students, teachers, and families with such efficiency! You are awesome. And miigwech



to each and every parent, grandparent, caregiver, and older sibling who braved the rain to join their student(s) in celebrating the end of another school year. Family involvement is critical to the health of the school community and Biidaaban students are lucky to have so many parents and caregivers engaged in their students' learning journeys.

Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik's new building has now witnessed an entire school year from start to finish. If the walls could talk, they undoubtedly have dozens of incredible stories to share. We hope all Biidaaban students, and their families enjoy a safe and fun summer. Until next (school) year!





Life-Long Learning Centre

Lifelong Learning Centre Delivers Opportunities!

Dan Owl, Manager of Infrastructure for Sagamok Education, voiced the need for training and certification in 'Working at Heights' for some of his staff in order to be safety compliant. A few requests brought forward by community members and departments initiated the idea of bringing this training on-site. A minimum/maximum of 12 registrants was required to do so and, according to Claudette Jones, Manager of Lifelong Learning Centre Programs and Services, it was immediately filled!

Future courses are in store for this highly sought-after training and ticket, so stay tuned for dates advertised on the digital signs, Facebook, and website, or contact Lifelong Learning Centre directly to speak to Kristy Bennett, Intake Coordinator.

The development of an online registration option for courses is currently underway and will be located at www.SagamokEducation.ca on the Registration tab on the Lifelong Learning page.

Courses and Certifications will continue to grow, and the Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) will become an accessible hub of training, specialized and continuing education, certified or for personal fulfillment. Over the past few months LLC has brought in Excel, MS Office Suites, Professional Office Administration all supported through collaboration with Cambrian College. In addition, Fire1 offered fire training and First Aid/CPR certification is on the horizon for employees looking to fulfill health and safety standards, and a host of interest courses including quilling, beading, regalia crafting, Anishinaabemowin, and more have also been happening at this location.

Surface Common Core Smelting, Underground Common Core, Confined Spaces, and numerous desirable programs are being offered in the newly appointed classroom spaces in partnership with Legend Mining and Z'Gamok. Judy Christie from Legend Mining has been coordinating the delivery of these opportunities with Claudette. As you may have noticed, the frequency and availability of mining training courses have increased over the months of July and August. These programs provide essential training to enhance employment and career opportunities for our community.

If you have suggestions for programs or training you would like to see offered in Sagamok, or would like to give constructive feedback for a course you have recently completed, please get in touch with the Lifelong Learning Centre or drop in to see us.

ESPANOLA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025



Congratulations to all our
Sagamok students who
graduated from
Grade 12!
Such a wonderful
achievement!
We wish you continued
success on your path.
Graduation Ceremony took
place at Espanola High
School on June 12, 2025.

Congratulations to: Connor, Dominic, Gavin, Quentin, Vilena, and Rayne
who received special awards and bursaries along with their diploma!

Photos included were available at time of print. We apologize if you are not pictured here but congratulate you on your achievement!

EDUCATION MONTH

Sunrise Ceremony, Biidaaban Powwow, and Open Houses

Sticks of wood stand in a teepee formation, over and encircling the flames. They seemed to resemble the leaders and community members gathered on this morning of ceremony standing as if 'shoulder to shoulder' to support each other in distributing warmth, light, and guidance to those around the circle. A scene befitting of the theme for this year's Education Month, "Lighting the Path to Your Future".

It was a brisk morning. Ghosts of breath billowed inside the arbor -- its windows and doors opened in invitation to all, the illuminating fire within beckoning visitors, and everyone huddled close together and closer to the fire burning warmly. Those present at this early hour were gifted with a spectacular sunrise -- layers of lavender, soft blue, and subtle orange stretched across an endless sky. Plenty of birdlife provided melodious song as the day woke up. Rain had been in the forecast but took no place in today's ceremony. The morning was quiet all around the arbor and frost sparkled on the wood that would fuel the sacred fire. It was a time that supported reflection from those in attendance -- to assemble their thoughts, strength, and intentions for Education Month and beyond.

As Wayne Southwind, Cultural Resource Worker, provided opening prayer, drum songs, smudge, and a message he was guided to share, shkode (fire) burned brightly. The flames flickered and climbed higher towards the opening in the roof, seeking oxygen to grow stronger, just as we too seek oxygen (support, strength, encouragement, knowledge, and teachings) to fan the flame within us. It is a flame eternally present, yearning to be inspired in the ways that will grow our fire within and light our path to show us our way in the world. Wayne, reflecting on the theme of Education Month 'Lighting the Path to Your Future', shared the following connection:

"Our light may help guide others on their journey, just as their light illuminates our path in ways our own fire

does not. And from the fire and light of each other we can illuminate the path even more -- the path of our past, our present, and our future. For it is all three paths that we find ourselves on at various stages of learning and development, and it is from all three paths that we continue to grow and develop on our search for education, understanding, knowledge, balance -- our own path that only we walk -- but that we are supported on by family, friends, community, leadership, and Creator."



Wayne also acknowledged the importance of education and the responsibility of educators/ leadership to the children; encouraging our children to continue to learn and seek the education they need to fulfill their goals and visions of themselves, and to honour their unique abilities and gifts that will help the community to sustain itself for future generations.

A crane chortled outside the Arbor, and Wayne chuckled at its notification of presence. "It is no mistake that crane came to visit this special ceremony today," shared Wayne as everyone heard the bird's distinctive gargling call overhead as it circled the Arbor at the Lifelong Learning Centre. "Crane is the clan that represents Leadership, and it is the leadership of those who are present here today that crane is guiding and supporting during the events and activities happening over this month

of Education. Crane brings the message along with his visit, that we are to be leaders for the community and leaders for each other to carry out the responsibilities and education events as they should unfold, and in a good way”.

The medicines (sage, tobacco, sweetgrass, and cedar), and furs were present; the sacred offerings of water and berries were shared amongst attendees. You could feel strength and calmness emanating from the shared fellowship. Wayne performed the sacred pipe ceremony and then laid the pipe on each person's shoulder as they reflected in quiet prayer and gratitude. Everyone present was offered semaa (tobacco), (taking it with their left hand as tradition notes it is closest to the heart) and to hold the eagle as an indicator of who was designated to speak. Each person offered their intentions aloud to the group, and then in private. They offered their semaa to shkode, opening (entering) and closing (exiting) the inner circle from the same place, continuing fluidly in a clockwise direction to completion.

Education Month's Sunrise Ceremony was 'a beautiful, calming, and reflective opportunity', as commented by those in attendance. Chi miigwech to Wayne for being available on this early morning, and for being ever present to support community members and events with his special gifts and abilities. You are appreciated! A full, hot breakfast of pancakes, bacon, eggs, juice, fruit, and accompaniments was catered and served in the Life-Long Learning Centre following the ceremony. All community members were invited to attend.

The next day, on May 2, Biidaaban held its first ever Powwow at the new school location, celebrating Education Month in true Anishinaabe style! Principal Becky Toulouse, during her opening remarks, commented on how wonderful it was to have everyone present - the drummers, dancers, singers, ceremonial grand entrance, flag bearers, and staff - and how moving/emotional the whole experience was. "It is great to have everyone coming together and seeing students circle back and stay in the community to lead others", she shared, noting the Young Warriors drumming group. She expressed miigwech to all who were involved in bringing the

event together, a large-scale powwow for the school community involving collaboration from neighbouring communities. The emcee, Darren (DJ) McGregor, started off with a timeline of events and warmed up the crowd with some 'comic relief' announcing the Head Dancers as Mr. Pow and Ms. Wow! (Head Youth female dancer - Aurora Southwind and Head Youth male dancer - Crus Peircey, both magnificently adorned in full regalia.) He then proceeded with general announcements, and relayed information to attendees on the cultural significance of various aspects of the powwow as



the event unfolded. This included information on the Grand Entry, the order of procession, Flag Songs and Flag Bearers, Drumming Groups, including their names and where they were from, Regalia Singers and Dancers, and the introduction of honourable Powwow Veteran, Robyn Eshkibok.

Darren helped guests to learn that it is the responsibility of the Veteran to:

- ensure safety and proper process is followed at the Powwow;
- offer protection/intervention should the need arise; and
- monitor that the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental balance of attendees is occurring throughout the gathering

Years ago, powwows were forbidden, Robyn recounted, so the Veteran was an important role to fill to ensure the safety of the community. "The Veteran song, performed by the Biidaaban School Singers/Drummers, is to honour all who preserve our safety and keep peace', added the Emcee. "It

includes those who defend our land and protect our water resources.”



In terms of the order of procession for opening a Powwow, it was acknowledged that Spirit World/Ancestors enter the powwow circle first, then once a complete circle is made, the next generations join the circular procession, from oldest to youngest. “Our Ancestors lead us, and we follow them,” shared Darren. This is done out of respect and to acknowledge their passing along tradition and knowledge as generations go by. For this inaugural Biidaaban Powwow, Caius Jones was the Flag Bearer and Staff Carrier for Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik, Neos-Peter Sutton- Stoney point was the Flag Bearer for the Every Child Matters flag, and Gregory Wells Jr. was the Flag Bearer for the Sagamok Anishnawbek community flag.

The Drumming Groups included:

- Whistling Wind (Grand Entry Flag Song);
- Biidaaban School Boys Drumming Group (Welcome Song);
- Sagamok Young Warriors; and
- Blackbull Moose Singers (drumming/songs to open the Powwow and support throughout the event).

All four drumming groups joined together; their drumming, beat, and voices in complimentary unison provided a powerful experience. Everyone present was invited to enter the dancing circle if they chose to, dancing in a clockwise fashion around the drums following the head dancers. After a few rounds, all were encouraged to join hands with their neighbour on either side of themselves, to grow an even larger

circle as more joined in and danced in celebration of this unity. Four-month-old, Hayes Toulouse, was present for his first ever powwow, wearing a custom ribbon shirt matching his mother’s ribbon skirt. His parents, Chalize and Scott Toulouse, were enjoying the powwow and smiling proudly as they enjoyed their baby son’s response to the drumming and dancing. Hayes was observing everything quite contentedly with his young eyes, and danced in the circle to the beating drums in a jolly jumper his parents configured for him and supported him in, each holding a side, while his tiny feet tapped and bounced off the ground in rhythm to the music. Many community members attended the event, including students’ family members, Aunties and Uncles, Grandparents, Elders, younger siblings, babies, staff and regaled performers. Vendors offered treats and hand-made items in the hallways outside of the powwow area, complimenting the traditional feel and inclusions of a community powwow. Games of chance and a canteen operated by the Grade



8 fundraising group were also on hand. The event was a huge success, a wonderful way to initiate Education Month and provide an exciting learning experience for students supported by community and culture.

Each of the Education Department's Units, Shki Wasse-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik, Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik, and the Life-Long Learning Centre, offered their own Open Houses on May



5. Community members were invited to take a walk through the facilities, find out about new and exciting offerings happening at the various sites, ask questions, give insights or share suggestions for improving services, and enjoy light refreshments and snacks, as well as swag (hats, lanterns, note pads, pens, etc.). This year's event was such a success that, for next year, an evening event is being considered as an opportunity to make the event available to additional Members of Sagamok. From everyone in the Sagamok Education Department, we express chi miigwech to our community for its constant support! Your input into continuing to improve services, provide our citizens with meaningful education experiences, and support culturally significant traditions is greatly appreciated. We hope you have enjoyed many of the programs offered over the course of Education Month and look forward to next year!

Learn to Speak Anishinaabemowin

Shout out to Steven Bennett



Miigwech to Steven Bennett who offered an Anishinaabemowin Language Class to the community. The class was open to anyone to attend and completely free. The 8-week course finished up in June with a celebratory cake for participants. It was well attended by community members and employees alike; ages ranging from 20 to 60+; and provided an opportunity to learn words, phrases, listen to pronunciation as well as speak with classmates to further absorb the language.

Steven also held a friendly Artwork competition in the spring for staff at Biidaaban, for which he offered a cash prize from his own funds! He is recognized here for his contributions within education and the community to revitalize the Anishinaabe language, culture, and traditions as something to be proud of and celebrated everyday. Chi miigwech, Steven, for bringing Mino-bimaadiziwin to Sagamok. Kagshkitoon too! Aaniin ezhi-anishinaabemodwaad.



Let's give a shout out to a Grade 11 Espanola High School Student, Julien Kiernan, on his recent achievement at the Skills Ontario Competition in Toronto. Julien was the 4th place winner in all of Ontario in the Carpentry Individual division! Congratulations, Julien!

He single-handedly (no, there was no loss of limbs – this is an individual category!) built a shed as the designated project in his category. Students go into the competition not knowing what they will be constructing. On the day of the competition, sometimes without building plans provided, they are assigned a project to complete. They are required to demonstrate their skills including construction design thought, measurements, tools, supplies, and using materials in the most efficient way possible to achieve the best end result. Points are deducted for incomplete projects, use of extra materials over and above the calculated provisions, and construction mistakes. It is quite an accomplishment for any student to win their way to the regional level, first being selected as the top contender at their high school, then earning a place at Regionals, and finally advancing to the Provincials amidst stiff competition from the entire region! It takes hard work, perseverance, determination, grit, patience, workmanship, and dedication, as well as a deep-rooted appreciation for one's skills and a passion to work towards mastery of the art.

Julien's passion for carpentry and his superior ability was evident at his booth during the recent Education Month Trades Day. Julien was on-site at the Trade Fair to demonstrate the SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major) program offered in high school that provides opportunities for students to achieve their diploma while focusing on a specialized career pathway. He discussed how, through SHSM, you can obtain certifications, knowledge, and on-the-job training through Co-op placements. When a student completes the required courses for the SHSM, upon graduation, they receive an embossed red SHSM seal on their diploma as well as formal recognition on their academic transcript. The SHSM can help students receive scholarships towards post-secondary education and provides immeasurable first hand experience, learning, and focused skill development opportunities that enrich their high school life and increase success in their professional life as they enter the workforce.

Four regional Skills Ontario Qualifying Competitions are hosted that students must first participate in to determine who will continue to the provincial level. Julien competed in the Northern division in Sudbury

this past spring, winning a seat at the Provincial Competition. The two-day intensive competition is held annually at the Toronto Congress Centre. High schools from the North Shore to Sudbury coordinated shared transportation for students to attend the competition. This provided a great opportunity to meet like-minded students and bridge communities as they all competed against and with each other for the top three medals in the entire province. Winners from this provincial competition go on to compete at this year's Skills Canada National Competition in Saskatchewan, then the World Skills Competition in Santiago de Chile if they advance.



If the SHSM program sounds like a program you're interested in, talk to a Guidance & Career Coach at the Lifelong Learning Centre, or Josephine Toulouse, High School Student Support Worker here at Sagamok Education. Staff at Espanola High School can also provide further information, or visit this website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/specialist-high-skills-major> for more details.

Professional Office Administration Course *with Cambrian College*



Igniting Youth In Education Conference

Thursday, March 20 – In a collaborative effort between the Family & Community Support, IT & Communications, and Education Departments, Sagamok's youth were invited to a full-day of learning and inspiration within the community.

Mr. Maracle's Grade 8 class, as well as students from Espanola High School, started their day by joining together with Elders, invited guests, and community members to attend the Headdress Ceremony in honour of Gimaa Angus Toulouse. Each of the Ceremony's appointed speakers had an important message to share with the youth.



Honoured guest, National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, reminded the youth that they are the next generation of leaders, and encouraged them to take up the responsibility of being in service to their community. Gimaa Toulouse built on this encouragement, saying:

"There is a wealth of knowledge and information, volumes of research that is available for you to continue the understanding of our history, our ceremonies, and who we are as Anishinaabe people, and the fight that still needs to take place in ensuring the Crown upholds its Treaty obligations." He went on to talk passionately about the value of reviving the Anishinaabemowin language, adding,



"We need to take the time so you, our young people, have the opportunity to hear, and to learn Anishinaabemowin. That is what it takes – to hear the language spoken. We need to bring it back."

Gimaa Toulouse expressed with great sincerity the sentiment that Indigenous people need to be recognized and be able to share our ways without restrictions of the colonial government. He encourages community members help youth become knowledgeable in as much of Sagamok's history as possible, as well as the traditions of Anishinaabe people.

The students received inspirational messaging from several additional speakers, including Cheyenne Kitchikake, who currently holds the responsibility of carrying the Eagle Staff that represents Canada's 634 First Nations, and Sagamok Councillors Leroy Bennett and Michael Abitong. Leroy shared his sentiments on Anishinaabe culture with the young Sagamonians, saying, "We have learned to fear our own way. But they are outdated fears." He encourages the youth to be proud of their culture, history, language, and practices and to keep learning about themselves. Leroy also explained the significance of the anungoos waabowaan (blanket) the Chief was wrapped in during the Headdress Ceremony, citing that there are in fact 8 blankets that are received

during a lifespan; the first is wrapped around you when you are born, and the eighth when one passes on to the next life. He shared, “It is up to us, especially our youth, to continue our traditions, as they will be filling our shoes, and they need to learn about being Anishinaabe.”

In a similar sentiment, Cheyenne said, “So get off your phones, go listen to Gimaa, to the Elders; they will tell you stories.” He explained the significance of the cylinder that holds the Headdress (when it is not being worn by Gimaa), and the symbolism that goes into the artwork that adorns the carrier. Of the Headdress itself, Cheyenne shares that it is a heavy weight to carry sometimes; a reminder of how heavy it is to carry the role as Chief, as leader. He went on to explain to the youth how his role came to be, the struggles one encounters on their own life path; the uncertainties, the questions, the



doubts, but also that there are always community members, family, and friends to support and help direct us on our path.

Following a hearty community feast to honour the Chief's Headdress Ceremony, Michael Abitong welcomed the youth back for the afternoon session. The goal was to provide youth with



information and inspiration about various fields of employment, skill development, and higher education. Michael urged the group to sit close to the front and to each other, with the reminder, “We are all family here.” Michael asked the youth to consider, “After you graduate Grade 8 or Grade 12, there's new paths. We need you to be educators, employees, representatives in your community, right here in Sagamok. Would you come home to provide these services?”

The conference was opened in a good way, with a smudging by Wayne Southwind and a drum song by the Young Warriors. Director of Education, Vance McPherson, provided a welcome to the group. He stressed that those working in Sagamok's Education Unit are here to support all Sagamonians in their educational journey, regardless of their age or their path. Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek support, even if – or perhaps especially if – they are unsure of what the next step is for their education. Vance also emphasized, “Don't let the construction taking place out front of the Life-Long Learning Centre fool you, we are open and operational to help you whether you're 14 or 94 and we are happy to help you reach your full potential.”

We were very lucky to have Jonathan Boyer-Nolan with us as the afternoon's emcee and keynote speaker. Jonathan has a positive, uplifting spirit, evidenced in the way he used enthusiasm – and at times, humour – to engage Sagamok's youth! Jonathan shared with the students his own personal story and education path, recounting numerous twists and turns throughout his youth and into his twenties. He recounted how he did not

follow in his Father's or Grandfather's path as Fire Chief and the tough times growing up in Garden River/Mississauga First Nation. "I had to learn the journey of feeling some pains, some hurts—go through tough times of addictions and mental health issues—it's okay to feel it and go through it, but don't ever stay there. Get back to who you want to be and who you were meant to be."



Jonathan added, "the healing journey is heavy work. There's no direct path from point A to point B, so get a little uncomfortable, get a little unsettled, and take a step." This was a common sentiment from all of the guest speakers: Just keep trying things until you find what really clicks for you. Jonathan offered the knowledge that "the door will be open, there's always a way to get where you want, and it's gonna work out. You may not know exactly where you want to go, just keep the door open and reach for [your dream]."

He reinforced with the youth that it is important that when we walk around, we need to stand up tall, proud, not hunched over because as our grandparents said, you can bump your head or run into a bear! So, stand tall, rise up proudly, and let's set ourselves and our goals high. Other sessions included:

- A skit and survey, presented by IT & Communications Director, Sean Cassidy, and Communications Supervisor, Jacqueline Craig, aimed at building an understanding about which communication channels to use to most effectively share information with youth.

- Career profiles from Sagamok Anishnawbek: HR Generalist, Anton Manitowabi, and Valerie Graham, Senior Finance Analyst. Anton focused on the way he was able to pivot his career from healthcare to administration, finding common ground in his desire to help people. He received strong support from Sagamok to pursue credentials in HR. Valerie similarly highlighted how she's been able to build a career she never thought possible in part because of Sagamok's support of her furthering her education as a finance professional, as well as the finding of balance between her work and family life.
- An overview of the services and support available locally at Sagamok's Life-Long Learning Centre (LLLC), presented by Guidance & Career Coaches Edie Fairburn and Tracey Stonepoint, with a focus on upcoming summer job applications, resume-building, and creating an education/career path based on one's interests. All are welcome to come to the LLLC's new location at 717 Sagamok Road to learn more about programs and employment opportunities, access computer labs and funding opportunities, and get support from on-site teachers and coaches.



The common message shared by all speakers was that their path never travelled a straight line. It was a zig-zagging path, just like the course of a river. And not to despair -- you too can find your

own path, the one meant only for you, for it is only you walking your path, no one else can ever walk the same path as you.

We hope this was an impactful day of learning outside the classroom for Sagamok's youth. It was encouraging to hear that most of the students in the room were planning to join the summer jobs program, and inspiring to hear some of their education and/or career dreams, including: Midwifery, Doctor, Culinary Arts/Baker, General Carpentry, Engineer, Game Warden, Mechanic, Political Leadership and Infrastructure and Planning/Development.



It is this type of dynamic, out-side-the-box learning and engagement that makes Sagamok a special place for students. Miigwech to everyone who contributed to planning and facilitating the Igniting Youth in Education Conference. We hope it is the first of many, with future events bringing together more Sagamok Departments and community partners to ensure that Sagamok youth have access to the role-models and resources they need to create meaningful pathways for their education, and their life.

STREET PARTY

AUG 7 / 4-8PM

Join us at the **Youth Centre** for an afternoon of fun and games!

www.SagamokAnishnawbek.com

Do you have a child in grade 7 to 12?

They may be eligible for immunization against HPV, Hepatitis B, and meningitis.

For more information, please reach out to Sagamok's **Community Wellness Department** at **705-865-2171**.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Students, Families, and Staff Answer the Question, *“What Does Mental Health Mean to Me?”*

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, which ran from May 5-9, Sagamok’s Mental Health & Addictions (MHA) Team invited Department staff teams, families, and individuals to decorate their windows using the theme ‘What Does Mental Health Mean to Me?’ Painting kits and canvases were provided upon registration for the event, and there were generous prizes for winners, such as gift cards to the movies, a catered lunch,



and more! The challenge was embraced wholeheartedly by the community!! To inspire reflection towards the contest, Darlene asked Daycare and Biidaaban students to consider, “what do you do to take good care of yourself?” A few of the replies from students were:

- Go on my trampoline
- Take care of my pet/fish
- Play with my puppy
- Go outside
- Eat healthy foods
- Exercise and play
- Visit with my grandparents/spend time with family and friends



The MHA Team focused students’ attention on the idea that just as we take care of our physical health, we need to take care of our mental health as well. “We often talk about our physical health, but it is equally important to talk about our mental health,” mentioned Darlene. After visiting each classroom, the team concluded their visit by introducing themselves and their services to the senior grades, and letting kids know that age 12 is the age of consent, whereby students can call the CWD themselves to access support and services to help them with their mental health and/or life challenges. “Support is available and even if you don’t want to talk to a counsellor, stop by our office to pick up a Resource Guide. We will support you and your family on your journey,” shared Raven. The week prior to the Window Decorating contest, Darlene McNaughton (Clinical Supervisor), Allison Owl (Youth Mental Health Worker – ages 12-24), and Raven Hammond (Children’s Mental Health Worker – ages 0-18) – visited Daycare, Biidaaban, and Elders Eagle Lodge to deliver information regarding services they offer to children, youth, adults, elders, and families who are members of Sagamok. They took the opportunity to introduce themselves to staff and students at these locations to help give themselves a familiar face. As part of Earth Day celebrations, the team delivered a peat pot and pea seed for students to plant and nurture, drawing a connection for students of the necessity to provide ourselves with the same nutrients for healthy growth as we would offer the plant–sunlight, fresh air, good quality food, vitamins, and a positive environment.

The team conveyed the message that they are here to support anyone – all ages, all stages.

They focus on a holistic support approach, taking guidance from the teaching of the medicine wheel to bring about balance and wellness to those who ask for assistance. In addition to their message for the students, the MHA Team also shared with teachers that they have the capacity to offer consultations, assisting them with challenges they may be facing with parents or students. Examples include how to better support students they notice are not meeting the grade level targets for curriculum/understanding or extra resources for families of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The MHA Team can facilitate case management and/or external referrals if families prefer to work with someone outside of the immediate community. Raven added, "With the consistency from both the Education and Community Wellness Departments, we have been able to bridge a good level of mental health support services."



With mental health being the theme of the week, Daycare, Biidaaban, and the Life-Long Learning Centre, as well as the Eagles Lodge, departments of Sagamok, individuals and families throughout the community, were challenged to decorate their windows with posters and paintings -- some emotional faces – smiley, sad, confused, frustrated – along with flowers, hearts, green ribbons, medicine wheels, peace symbols, thought bubbles and wording such as: Speak Your Mind, You are Not Alone, Take Care of Your Mind, You Matter, Family, Music, Pets, You are Loved, Healing Takes Time. The window designs were creative and beautifully done; each as unique as the people who designed them! They stood out brightly for passersby to enjoy all week long,



offering a gentle and constant reminder that we all need to take care of mental health in ourselves and others; that it is healthy and safe to talk about our struggles; and that support is nearby.

The exercise in decorating the windows using paint and imagination brought people together to talk more openly about what mental health means to each of us, a time to reflect and destress, and to demonstrate that we are all connected through this topic of conversation. At any point in our lives, we might be the one seeking help or we might be the one helping someone else through their struggle. It is important to understand that everyone needs support and that support is always available if you reach out and ask for it. By performing the physical motions of painting, this process can be both meditative while allowing creative juices to flow. Painting fosters collaboration between fellow employees, students, and staff members, ranging from toddlers to Elders. It is this interconnectivity, understanding, compassion, communication, and effort towards a better version of ourselves and supporting others, that will bring about acceptance, change, and mental health wellness.

As Raven Hammond (Children's Mental Health Worker) highlights in her announcement, the MHA team was very pleased to see such a positive response to the contest: "Darlene and I had the pleasure of driving through the community this morning [May 9], taking in all the beautiful and inspiring artwork created for the Window Painting Contest. We were truly moved by the creativity and thoughtfulness that each display brought to the theme of mental health awareness."

Here's an excerpt from the summary provided by Raven following the contest's conclusion:

"We're thrilled to announce the winners of this year's contest—congratulations to all! Department Winners are Children & Family Advocacy Unit (CFAU), Santana Bennett team, and IT & Communications!!! We will be in touch shortly to provide your department a catered lunch.

For community members, the winners are Jasmine Abitong, Trista Toulouse and Koli Peltier. We will be in touch shortly to provide your prizes as well. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in this week's events. Your engagement and enthusiasm made this initiative a success.

We would also like to recognize the CFAU, Communications, Daycare, Eagles Lodge, Biidaaban, and Education Departments for their collaboration and support throughout this campaign. And to our incredible Mental Health and Addictions Team — thank you for your ongoing dedication and tireless efforts to support mental wellness every day."

Chi miigwech to the Mental Health and Addictions Team for providing this creative outlet and reflective community contest to bring awareness to Mental Health and Wellbeing within our community. The window decorations are still visible, providing us with a reminder of the importance of keeping mental wellness in sight! And thought, words, and actions have a lasting impact, so let's be mindful towards others and ourselves. This was a meaningful way to bring awareness to a topic that can be tricky for some to discuss. Painting or creating artwork can share equally strong messages and stimulate conversation when talking is tough. Through fun challenges such as the Window Decorating Challenge for Mental Health Awareness Week, we can begin to reshape the layers of stigma and fear surrounding openly discussing our mental health. Miigwech for offering the schools and community a window into information and services provided by the Mental Health and Addictions Team. We appreciate all that your team does to support Sagamok!



CAREER FAIR, TRADES DAY, AND BIIDAABAN STUDENT RESEARCH FAIR

During Education Month, a variety of Fairs, Programs, Events, and Presentations were made available to the community. There was truly an opportunity for everyone!

The Life-Long Learning Centre (LLLC) is a unification of Sagamok Education's previous departments of Employment, Education, Skills Development, Training, Adult Education, Secondary and Post-Secondary. The LLLC staff organized and facilitated two full-day events at Sagamok's Multi-Educational Centre; a Career Fair on May 8, and Trades Day two weeks later, on May 22. Both Fairs were held from approximately 9am to 3pm, welcoming the community to attend for knowledge gathering, job applications, and to explore the booths set up by partner organizations who were present. And of course, there was lots of fun swag to be collected, and a tasty smorgasbord of lunch options and snack-time treats to be enjoyed! Each Fair was well attended by community members and provided an interesting social outlet and on-site resources.



Both the Career Fair and the Trades Day respectively offered an assortment of booths and specialized Trades people, College/Universities, and Organizations. It is important to note these

opportunities are relevant to anyone, no matter if you are still in school, looking for a new career, or retired! A special visit by Biidaaban senior students and high school students attending EHS happened at both events, allowing students to explore career pathways they perhaps haven't previously considered, test out some unique equipment and gear, ask questions one-on-one, and find out more information on how they can be supported by the Life-Long Learning Centre Guidance & Career Coaches to fulfill their dreams and ambitions at whatever stage they are at.



Other attendees found it helpful for looking into transitioning from their current career pathway. For those who are retired from the work force, it was an opportunity to meet up with other Sagamonians, have lunch, and learn about emerging employment and industries on-and off-reserve. Equipped with resumes in hand, or not, visitors were able to apply, enquire, and meet potential employers in real time! This personal and intimate setting helps many people to 'break the ice' and allows employers and employees to meet and come to understand each other on equal, friendly turf. Questions are always welcome, and a nice way for booth presenters to interact with community members, learn more about unique Anishinaabe cultural practices, and add interest to their day-long activity of booth management.

The Career Fair saw approximately 134 registered visitors come through the doors with

67 of those in the Youth age demographic. Some of the booths present at the Career Fair, were:

- Colleges – Sault, Cambrian and Confederation
- Universities – Laurentian, Nipissing, Ottawa and Ontario Tech
- Service Canada and Contact North
- Centre for Indigenous Theatre – travelled from Toronto! school offering acting, singing, performance instruction and opportunity
- Indigenous Art School
- Forensics
- Royal Bank of Canada – investigations, fraud, investments and Future Launch program information
- Ontario Geological Society
- NOSM (Northern Ontario School of Medicine) Students – Joel Pitre and Emelie Cote currently in Sagamok on placement to gain exposure to/learn Anishinaabe culture/practices/beliefs to help them better understand and serve FN patients when practicing and attempt to remove ignorance/racism
- Sagamok HR and CFAU, Glencore, Kenjgewin Teg, ONECA
- Canadian Armed Forces – cool platoon gear to try on/get pictures in
- ISETS/Summer Student Program, Waawaasnoode Adult Learning & ACE program
- Delsy, who travelled from Peru, (she was first met during Gimaa's trip in early spring and came to visit Sagamok) offered hand-made stitched items for sale to raise funds for her village; she discussed life in Peru, their remote community, culture, practice, and survival methods, stories about the meaning, colours used, and the person who created some of the products displayed

If you missed the opportunity to update or create your resume during the month leading up to the Career Fair, the Guidance & Career Coaches at the LLLC confirm that they offer on-going services

to support community members. Call and book an appointment (705-865-2421) or drop by and say hello when the time is right for you; they are always happy to meet you! The LLLC is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm and is located at 717 Sagamok Road. If you are not sure what career pathway is right for you, the staff are very knowledgeable and can offer a **STRONG** Assessment; a free aptitude style testing that only takes 30 minutes to complete. If you seek tutoring for your Grade 12/GED diploma, post-secondary education, bursaries, grants, or financial assistance to set you off on your personal pathway in a good way, the LLLC staff can help point you in the right direction. **YOUR** vision, **YOUR** life journey – the LLLC staff are here to help light the path to **YOUR** future.



Trades Day was equally well attended (104 registered visitors) by members from all walks of life – looking to learn, discover, or share their trade with others, and snag some nice swag as well! LLLC provided customized Sagamok Education bags for visitors to put their brochures and goodies into; pens, chocolates, wooden seed boxes, excavator shaped stick drives, etc. Shout out to Espanola High School student and Sagamok's own, Julien Kiernan, who ambitiously manned a booth at Trades Day. He had his SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major) construction project -- a hand-built shed -- on-site for visitors to inspect. Julien is a Grade 11 student at Espanola High School and was the 4th place winner out of ~25 competing students at the recent Skills Ontario Competition in Toronto! Awesome work, Julien, and congratulations to you! Your workmanship and enthusiasm towards

your trade are inspirational! Julien described the SHSM program to visitors at his booth, noting that it is a hands-on learning style, provides opportunity for excursions/travel/exploration, and participation in the SHSM aids with scholarships and co-op placements. He recommends it to youth, and it was wonderful seeing him at the Fair representing his age demographic and what can be accomplished in the trades field.



Hydro One, Sault College, APSIP, Glencore, Vale, and many other interesting trade-related partners were also present. ZEI had a booth with representatives highlighting positions in the trades they were looking to fill and enlightening visitors on credentials, education, and where to go/what to do to get certified for employment with them. They included their Education Month Bingo Cards that were in play from May 1 to 26, which registrants could take with them to events all month long in an attempt to complete a winning row or card, earning them ballots for fantastic prizes. Miigwech to ZEI for hosting this game and offering enticing prizes to encourage participation in all the events planned by departments of Sagamok in May! The LIVE draw took place May 30 with winners announced and shared on the Members of Sagamok Facebook page. Congratulations to all of the winners!

The Student Research Fair, held at Biidaaban on May 29, was the third engagement of its sort this month, with this fair being organized by Biidaaban staff. It showcased careers researched by students in Grade 6, 7, and 8, displayed in informative and eye-catching booths. Visitors from the community

attended to view the student projects, learn where students' career interests lie, ask questions, and gain feedback from students about their research and career choice. Some of the careers presented included:

- Police Officer
- Heavy Equipment Mechanic
- Baker
- Race Car Driver/ Dirt Bike Racer
- Artist / Cartoonist / Actress
- Pharmacist / Oral Hygienist
- Gun Smith
- Miner
- Carpenter
- Zoologist
- Video Game Developer
- Lawyer
- Mental Health Worker
- Surgeon
- Astronaut
- Astrophysicist (Say that 3 times quickly!)
- Transport Truck Driver...

There are so many interesting and diverse career paths developing in the minds of our youth here in Sagamok! It was exciting to see their enthusiasm and confidence igniting during the fair! Whatever career path they find themselves on in the future, may they continue to feel supported, guided, and encouraged by family, peers, community members, and education leaders. Great work, students! Chi miigwech to Biidaaban Staff for offering students this personal opportunity to showcase their talents and career knowledge through an interactive community event.



Education Month Wrap Up

On May 30th Education Month wrapped up with a BBQ Lunch at the Lifelong Learning Centre; 717 Sagamok Road. The lunch of BBQd burgers, sausage on a bun, hotdogs, salads, veggies and dip, desserts and drinks were catered by way of tender and served to guests in one of the classroom meeting spaces. Everyone mingled together sharing stories of the day and experiences of the past month of activities held to educate community members on the services offered by Sagamok Education and Community Departments, as well as introduced members to new locations and facilities used to offer these services.

As with any great event held in Sagamok, it's about gathering people, sharing good food together, and having a chance to win PRIZES! A number of amazing prizes were donated to the ZEI organized Education Month Bingo, all of which seemed to carry the theme of summertime fun! Prizes, donors, and winners were as follows:

- Swimming Pool, ZEI, Leah Collins
- Waterproof Speaker, ZEI, Ocean Toulouse
- Metal Firepit, A10 Fabrication, Edie Fairburn
- Rocking Chair, Vale, Cecile Toulouse
- All-Terrain Wagon, Charlotte Wright
- Beads/Books/Dollarama Gift Card, CFAU, Collins Southwind
- Lawn Care Kit, Claims & Negotiations, Ivey Southwind
- 2 Bicycles + 1 Fishing Kit, Lands & Resources, Bike 1: Natasha Toulouse, Bike 2: Martina Southwind, Fishing Kit: Darla Jones
- \$1000 Cash, Sagamok Education, Katherine Ritchie
- Kayak/Fishing Kit, Sagamok Education, Rebecca M Toulouse
- Camping Gear, Sagamok Education, Colleen Toulouse
- Patio Set, Sagamok Education, Shaylynn Hardisty-Toulouse

The Prize Draw was held after the lunch, and Live Streamed at the Members of Sagamok FaceBook page. A chance to win a prize was earned by obtaining a Bingo Card from Z'Gamok at anytime throughout Education Month in May, and completing the tasks outlined in the individual squares until you completed a line or several or a full card. It was checked by a Z'Gamok member and an entry ballot was received for each line/card completed. Each prize had its own sealed ballot container and contents were transferred to a Bingo Wheel for shuffling and a random ballot was selected while community members watched in growing excitement to hopefully hear their name announced.

Chi miigwech to everyone who played a role in planning, organizing, providing events and activities to support Education Month, volunteered, donated, and contributed positively towards this year's month-long event highlighting the many services and opportunities available to members right here in Sagamok Anishnawbek.





e-SCOOTer

SAFETY & REGULATIONS

i what is an e-scooter?

An **electronic kick-scooter** (e-scooter) is a vehicle that has:

- Two wheels (one at the front and one at the back)
- A platform to stand on
- A handlebar for steering
- An electric motor that does not exceed 500 watts
- A maximum speed of 24 km/h on a level surface

E-scooters come in different styles, weights, and speed capabilities.

rules & regulations

To operate an e-scooter under the terms of the pilot you must:

- Be at least 16 years old
- Stand at all times while riding
- Wear a bicycle helmet if under 18 years old

You are not permitted to:

- Carry passengers
- Carry cargo
- Operate an e-scooter on controlled access highways (eg. 400-series, QEW, etc.)

Similar to bicycles, all [Highway Traffic Act](#) rules of the road apply when riding e-scooters. Penalties will also apply to violations of the pilot regulation (fine of \$250 to \$2,500).

Highway Traffic Act: ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h08



Sagamok Justice Program

☎ 705-865-1884

📍 610 Sagamok Rd, Unit #2

🌐 www.SagamokAnishnawbek.com



Education Supports



Making Cedar Tea and Fire Building Grade 7



Miigwech to
Priscilla Abitong,
Ieshia Owl,
Janice and Gina
Stoneypoint
for keeping our
Daycare and
School-aged
learners nourished
all year long!




Literacy Department Updates








Submitted by: Stephanie Sonnenburg, Literacy Resource Teacher

We now have a library assistant (Skylar Sayers-Southwood) working full-time in the library, helping to catalogue and organize our books and resources to best help our students and staff. We have been working on setting up the library to make it easy for staff and students to find what they need or be able to access their favourite books. Our time will continue throughout the summer to make sure the library is ready to go for fall. We have also been creating a 'wish list' of books and resources that we would like to see in the library as well. If anyone would like to give suggestions to what books or types of books they would like to see available in our school library they can email suggestions to sonnenburgs@biidaabanschool.ca.

The book vending machine has been an exciting addition to the library and many students are always looking forward to the next month and their next free book. We have received a new shipment of books and have many different culturally relevant books available. Students get to keep these books and build home libraries. We hope that everyone has been enjoying these books!

We have had a busy year in terms of literacy and with the end of the year arriving we have lots of data that we are collecting and assessing. We started a new reading assessment program and have completed our first year using it. After the pandemic, many students across Canada including our students here in Sagamok, have gaps in their learning. These gaps just keep getting bigger as students progress into the next school year. We have gained some insights into where our students are struggling, and our new program is allowing us to plan for next year so that we can help students decrease those gaps in their learning. For our K-3 classrooms we are focusing on using UFLi (a science of reading program) that brings students back to the basics of learning to read -- phonics and phonemic awareness -- being two of the areas of focus. Whereas students in grades 4-8 will have more focus placed on reading fluency in their learning. This means students will be reading a lot and practicing reading all the time, while also learning vocabulary, which in turn helps them with the comprehension of what they are reading. Staff and students worked really hard this year, and we are looking forward to continuing this effort next year!

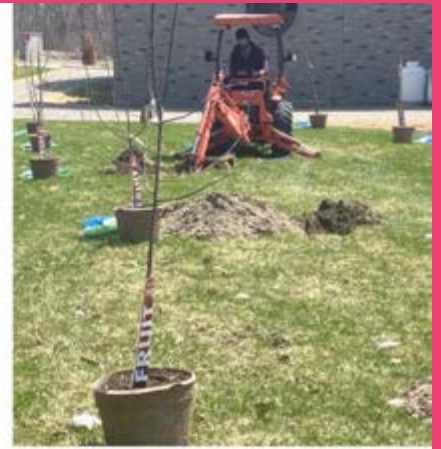


Seven Grandfather Teachings	
	Love Zaagidwin To be at peace with yourself and able to express love to your family, friends, and community through your actions and words.
	Respect Mnaadendimowin Respect is an attitude. To honour and listen to ourselves, elders, parents and teachers is a sign of respect.
	Humility Dbaadendizhwin Think of others before yourself. Humility is to live your life free from boasting and to have a modest sense of your own worth.
	Bravery Aakwa'ode'win To have courage is to do what is right.
	Wisdom Nibwaakaawin Wisdom is gained through experience and knowledge. To have wisdom is to know the difference between right and wrong.
	Truth Debweewin To know truth is to know and understand all of the original laws as given by the Creator and to remain faithful to them.
	Honesty Gwa'neadziwin To walk through life with integrity is to know honesty.

Miigwech to our Nogdawindamin team of Knowledge Keepers (some are absent from this photo) who visited the Daycare and Biidaaban throughout the school year 2024/25, sharing concepts and practices for daily living that incorporate the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Many examples were shared as well as personal experiences of the Knowledge Keepers themselves, to help students relate how the Teachings are an integral part of Anishinaabe culture as well as a way of life.



Education Supports - Infrastructure Updates



Infrastructure Update Projects include: New fruit trees and garden beds installed at Daycare, Biidaaban, and Lifelong Learning Centre in collaboration with LRE Chevaun Toulouse and Greenhouse Operators Adam & Angela White; New HVAC System, upgraded electrical panel, installation of accessible doors and ramps, and solar panel project coming soon as a continuation of the GICB Grant; Yardwork at Lifelong Learning Centre including removal of old chain link fence from perimeter, installation of new gravel/parking lot base for increased parking for staff and students accessing programs/training, new exterior signage coming soon to LLC, hydroseeding of yard at LLC following fence removal and landscape beautification; office spaces and classrooms designated with furnishings moved into place; new computer lab workspace installed in Guidance & Career Coach offices; Hiring of Summer Students for general maintenance of three school sites.

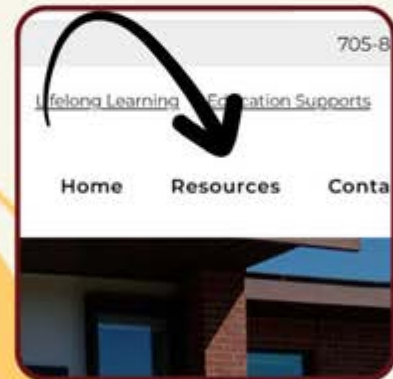
START LEARNING ANISHINAABEMOWIN TODAY!

www.sagamokeducation.ca



Begin by going to the
Sagamok Anishnawbek
Education website at:
www.sagamokeducation.ca.
Select the far right icon for
Education Supports!

Once you are on the
Education Supports
page, select Resources
(from the three tabs on
the header bar on the
right hand side.)



In Resources, you can access language courses to
help you learn Anishinaabemowin!

Courses are completely FREE and you can repeat
them as often as you like. We recommend you do!

Work at your own pace, on your own time,
in your home or on your phone.



Start learning today!
Anishinaabemowin gii-miikawaadizi
Our language is beautiful!



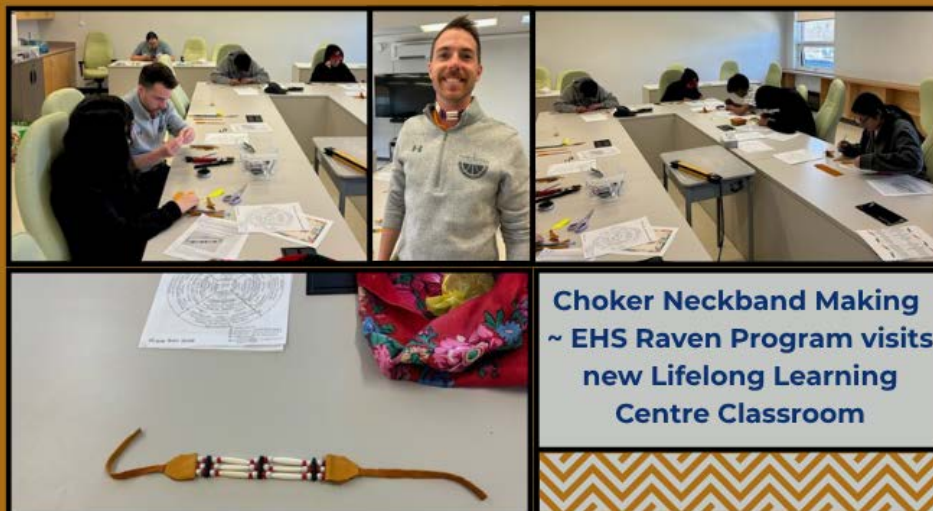
Land-Based Learning Highlights



Rock Painting ~ Positive Thoughts ~ Grandfather Teachings



Mother's Day Flower Pot Painting ~
Staff Secret Spirit Week



Choker Neckband Making
~ EHS Raven Program visits
new Lifelong Learning
Centre Classroom



Canoe
Fundamentals
and Safety Training

Let's Get Sappy!

Sugarbush with Land-Based Learning

With snowsuits on and boots to navigate the half-frozen, half-thawed terrain, runny noses and rosy cheeks framing smiles as bright as the welcome sun of spring, Daycare and Biidaaban students enjoyed an outing to the sugarbush and sap boiling station set up in a clearing just off the road leading to Fort LaCloche.

Blue buckets hung from the maple trees; three per tree according to Michael Abitong, Land-Based instructor for Sagamok Education. One bucket faces each of the directions following the sun, West, South, and East, where there is optimal warmth, thawing the sap inside the tree so it will run into the buckets poised to catch it. Approximately 80 sap buckets are placed at the boiling station. The children scurried excitedly about, gathering them from the trees, dumping the sweet water into a large collection barrel, and then racing back to the tree with their classmates to rehang the bucket before too much sap is lost.

The fire burns warmly at the center of the little syrup making 'village', with a tripod erected overtop of the fire, and three large cast iron cauldrons hang just above the flames, containing the various stages of the sap boiling process. Patrick Wemigwans, a friendly helper working alongside Michael Abitong, gently stirs the sap while it cooks, and

demonstrates various key pieces of knowledge to the eager students. He shows them the ladle he uses, how to keep the fire just right (stacks of wood and pieces of birch bark wait nearby to stoke the fire), and how he pours the sap through a strainer to remove the bits of bark and bugs that may have fallen in if the lid isn't on just right. He dips a small sample cup out of the sap barrel for

students to taste test the cold, clear, sugary water, generated straight from the maple tree, prior to boiling and eventual transition into maple syrup.

Patrick and Michael hold up two drills for the students to differentiate between; the antique one requires a good amount of strength to

physically turn the handle to drive the drill bit into the tree (for tapping purposes), while the other, an electric drill, is much quicker, but noisier and needs a full battery charge before heading out. Not every student was keen to give it a try, but many opted to operate the drill themselves, while Michael oversaw and helped guide them. Amazing for 6 or 7-year-old kids! For most, it was their first time operating a power tool! There was quite a feeling of accomplishment, as seen by their expressions of concern and complete concentration at first, to bewilderment when they observed the hole they had created, and awe when the natural sap began to immediately gather at the hole site.



Students were given a tap and either twisted it in or gave it a 'tap', or two, until it was firmly in place. After that, they picked up one of the emptied blue sap buckets and figured out how to hang it on the built-in hook and attach the lid. Now, all that was left was to wait for the precious sap to drip down and gather in the bucket.



This process takes many hours, of course, and is a continuous labour of love during sap season. Students participate in their scheduled block of time and are taught many important lessons during their learning time with Michael, Patrick, and their teachers in the outdoor classroom. And the learning is not just about sap/syrup! When



students are outdoors, learning from the land like this, they learn about working together with others, surviving in various climates and terrain, navigational techniques, safety and stewardship, protecting the environment, while utilizing its bounty responsibly and respectfully, and enjoying



the innocent fun that is so often found outdoors. The sun on your face, birds chirping in the trees, squirrels scampering about, the breeze blowing the smoke from the fire into your face, and friends

discovering ice formed on puddles and cracking it open to get to the mud cakes down below - this is all an exploration of self and surroundings. Nature is engrained in the fabric of our soul and when we are close to it on occasions like these, growth happens, learning is engaged, the good life courses through us like the sap in the maple tree.

Of course, it doesn't end here! What trip to the sugarbush would be complete without a sample of the rich, amber syrup the students were a part of making? A trek along the forest trail leads to the classes at Fort LaCloche, where volunteers have been busily preparing a feast of hot pancakes and sausage. A generous serving of fresh maple syrup is drizzled overtop, and the students dig in, savouring the fruits of their labour and their Creator.

Miigwech to our land-based instructors who plan and organize these opportunities for students of Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojinh Gamik, Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik, and the high school Raven group to learn about tapping maple trees and preparing the sap boiling station. Miigwech to the volunteers at Fort LaCloche for setting up a welcoming space for students to sit down and enjoy a tasty seasonal treat. Miigwech to Kara Abitong for the video compilation she shared to further the kids' knowledge about the sugarbush and local area, and to Calvin, and all bus drivers, who transported the students safely to and from this outdoor learning adventure. The waterfall outside of Fort LaCloche was flowing faster than the sap from the trees, but its melodious thundering sound was the perfect picturesque backdrop to cap off an enriching day outdoors.

The syrup produced was used at Biidaaban and Daycare for meals and baking, and shared with the Elders Eagle Lodge, too!



Tree Relay



Language Workshop with Barbara Nolan

On May 29 & 30, the Lifelong Learning Centre hosted the highly acclaimed and special guest, Barbara Nolan; Language Commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation. An 'Ojibwe Elder and Nishnaabemwin-language immersion teacher from Garden River, having grown up in Wiikwemkoong (and where her heart remains), Barbara has a long history of teaching and developing resources to help encourage new and long-time language speakers. One App available to iOS and Android users, is 'Nishnaabemdaa'. Her website can be found at www.barbaranolan.com.

Barbara's focus on immersion learning incorporates the concept of language exposure to young children and adults amidst everyday, 'on the land' learning and experiences, for example, picking blueberries, cleaning fish, or general daily routines such as starting the fire or cooking a meal. Offering the Anishinaabe word in place of the English word for everyday objects and places is a great way to develop awareness of



the language and culture, an openness and comfortable space to share the language between children, adults and Elders, and creates a solid foundation at an early stage for which to build Anishinaabe language and customs upon. "The best thing we can do (to revitalize the language) is having immersion starting in Daycare. The children can hear you, understand you, get used to your voice; how you pronounce words, and become familiar with hearing the language", says Barbara. "The children don't talk right away, so if they hear [the language] from babies, by the time they're 3-3.5 years old, they will know the language intuitively. Keep sharing it, not translating what you say, just speaking it." Barbara, clearly devoted to the preservation of Anishinaabemowin stated, "If I had known to stay speaking the language with my kids, they would be bilingual today. We were told not to speak the language, not to be proud of us as Anishinaabe people, but we need to throw that thinking away and be proud of who we are and our language and speak or teach it more openly."

Barbara's workshop in Sagamok was attended by a variety of people – daycare and school educators, administrators, committee and council members, non-fluent and fluent speakers – ranging from 20 to 60+ years old. While some were there to learn how to teach the language in the school or home, others attended for personal development. Everyone expressed the desire to ensure the language continues and are looking to offer their knowledge to the community in some way. Everyone present was invited to share why they were there and what they hoped to achieve from the workshop, which helped to solidify just how passionate and committed community members and departmental staff (indigenous and non-) are about revitalizing and sustaining beloved Anishinaabe language and cultural traditions.



Barbara responded to this hunger for language revitalization by providing training on how to:

- Gain knowledge of language acquisition, immersion, revitalization, and bilingualism;
- Develop a strong foundation of the language;
- Pass Anishinaabemowin on to the next generations;
- Develop programming to facilitate the instruction of proficient second language speakers of Anishinaabemowin; and
- Share knowledge on how to put your knowledge, talents and abilities to use in an immersion setting and deliver this knowledge within the school, community, and at home.



Barbara shared snippets of her personal journey towards Anishinaabemowin revitalization efforts over a career which spans her lifetime. The revitalization Anishinaabe language and customs has seen impressive advancements and momentum over the past number of years, and she encourages everyone to continue supporting each other towards these efforts and along the path. It has not been easy work, but it is both meaningful and necessary.

Barbara's experiences have taught her that the adult students she teaches, who are learning the language for the first time, are like babies in her approach – they are just starting to learn. As an adult learner, she reminds attendees, we need to remember that it takes a long time to build a language. It is not just a few weeks or months of learning. However, daily and consistent practice and use of the language, listening to it spoken, interacting with Elders and children in everyday conversation -- will cause it to become more familiar, more natural, and more engrained in us. A good model of language revitalization involves: Language Revival, Replacing Language Loss with Language Shift, and Creating a Language Plan. She encouraged everyone to become a language apprentice – share the knowledge you have, speak the language freely no matter what people say or think about how differently you pronounce or describe something versus the next person, don't worry about making mistakes, be proud to speak your language - not afraid or reluctant, and know that there will be similarities within the language dialects that will allow communities to understand what you are saying and all of this will continue the forward movement of language revitalization.

"We want to create speakers -- create little Anishinaabe, teaching them who we are, our gentleness, instill in them our traditions, our story, help them understand we can be proud of who we are", Barbara shares. This was a message she shared with consistency over the two-day workshop. Attendees came away with a stronger understanding of what role they needed to play within language revitalization efforts, and how they can uniquely offer their current level of skills, knowledge, and passion towards this goal. The revitalization of a people, a way of life, and a story that explains it using Anishinaabe words.

Miigwech to Barbara Nolan for sharing her knowledge with Sagamok and for visiting our community to provide inspiration and information on how to revitalize our language, our story, and our love for both.

Jordan's Principle Day was celebrated at Daycare and Biidaaban on May 9, 2025, since the 20th Anniversary occurred on Saturday, May 10 and students were not in school. Marie Toulouse, and Garnet Trudeau, of the Child & Family Advocacy Unit travelled to the Daycare and Biidaaban locations to deliver a message about the importance of honouring the day, and delivered free Jordan's Principle bears to each student as part of the "Bear Witness" movement, in memory of Jordan River Anderson for whom the movement began.

They also provided a brief overview of what services and types of assistive devices or items could be accessed for First Nations families. The Jordan's Principle was a **child-first** principle formed to ensure that First Nations children and families could access the services they needed, when they needed them. Marie briefly outlined the changes being made to the Jordan's Principle program, and helped students and staff to understand these revisions to services.

Marie brought along two of her own teddy bears to honour the day; one that was hand made by her mother when she was a child! Children in both the Daycare and Biidaaban schools were invited to bring their bear or stuffie to school on May 10 to symbolize their awareness (Bear Witness) and support of Jordan's Principle.





Espanola
High
School



Spring Powwow
2025



Anishinaabemowin Language Learning - Anishinaabemowin to English translation

Ziisbaakdoke Giizis – April
Miinaande – Blue
Miigwetch Giizhgate – Sunday
Ntam Giizhgate – Monday
Niish Giizhgate – Tuesday
Nswi Giizhgate – Wednesday
Niiwo Giizhgate – Thursday
Naanoo Giizhgate – Friday
Oodetoo Giizhgate – Saturday
Ninaatig – Maple Trees
Bneshiin – Bird
Gmiwan – Rain
Biidaabin – First Light
Waaban – Dawn
Gizhebaagook – Morning
Giizhgate – Daytime
Ehbangishmok – Setting Sun
Zhkwaingishmok – Dusk
Niibing – Summer

Memengwaan – Butterfly
Mdaawsi Shi Ngodwaaswi – Sixteen
Wiin Ntam – his/her turn
Nengaach – Slow Down
Gindan – Read it
Tisge – to Colour
Waabaande – grey
Bdakjiigan – fork
Pabwin – chair
Noos – Father
Emkwaan – spoon
Dooowin – table
Miijim – food
Mishoomis – Grandfather
Aki – Earth
Ogaa – Walleye
Saawe – Perch
Waawan – Egg
Baakwang – Easter
Waabooz – Rabbit

Some tips for practicing Anishinaabemowin:

- Speak the words aloud together.
- Repeat them three times in a row.
- Practice the letter combination sounds.
- Really pronounce each sound slowly and clearly.
- Test each other on memorization.
- Use recipe cards on items in your home or put on your fridge to make words visible daily.
- Visit with Elders and practice the language.
- Have fun with the language and use it whenever having a conversation, substituting the words you know.
- Use the FREE language resources found on our Education website at www.sagamokeducation.ca under 'Resources'.
- Read books in Anishinaabemowin and English together.



Let's revitalize our language together. Start 'small'.
– April to June Words –
Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik | Daycare

Niibing - Summer Vacation Puzzle Time

G F Y M S T U Y G N P W I T O I S J A G R I A H C
N I D A H F A C I S E I S I H U M Z I G F O O D T
R M I G D D M E I W R I W S N M K I N A D N I G A
U D I Z S R G C Z I C N A D T W Z T A G H Z I I G
T L A R H S U P H F H P A Y A H W A L L E Y E T I
Y Q U E I G G T G G E Y D P G F W A A B A N S A H
M H Z T R B A L A S V Y M A H R S V W X S F P A Z
T O H N T S A T T S I M T E Z I U N A A N O O N I
E K O D K A A B S I I Z D T I D N A Q X Q R O I I
N Y B N G P G G T J B N I A I A M O U Z K K N N G
M E T O A L M H I N A N Z I G Y O I M A T N T Y Y
G A N B S I X I Z A D Z E G G D P M I P O E S A A
M N W G W R M Y N I Y A D S E N D E W G E W R D B
D I I A A P E I P R I V H T H N S Y M Q W N I N I
N A N N V A I B L U E G O R O I I O O K U E F O R
R S W A R M C Y W L K O C D D E I B O W W W T M D
R E A N Q O D H P Z S R S U M T Y N A N I A R C T
U Y H A H O M A T R E E S I W E U L C A L I A S H
I J Z S W W M T H H C K T A X Q L E F O D N N N T
O K I N R E O A T W H Y A T C T I B S R L I M P Z
N I A Y P B U A R I A W U M I D E D A D E O I Q S
N L T R C E F D A D A Z D A U N L E S T A T U B L
G I I Z H G A T E N I W P O O D G U N I D Y T R O
H N A A W G N E M E M K O O G A A B E H Z I G U W
X V E H B A N G I S H M O K N G O D W A A S W I B

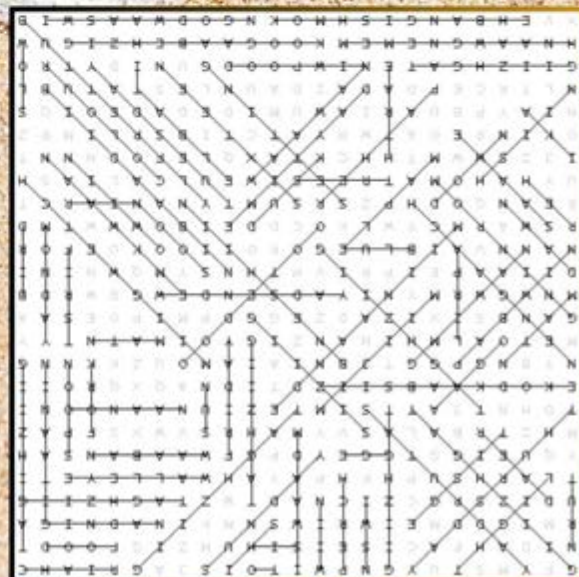
Find the words
in the puzzle.
Words can go in
any direction.
Words can share
letters as they
cross over each
other.

Ziisbaakdoke Giizis - April
Miinaande - Blue
Miigwetch Giizhgate - Sunday
Ntam Giizhgate - Monday
Niish Giizhgate - Tuesday
Nswi Giizhgate - Wednesday
Niiwo Giizhgate - Thursday
Naanoo Giizhgate - Friday
Oodetoo Giizhgate - Saturday
Ninaatig - Maple Trees
Bneshiin - Bird
Gmiwan - Rain
Waabaande - grey
Bdakjiigan - fork
Pabwin - chair
Noos - Father
Emkwaan - spoon
Dooopwin - table
Miijim - food
Mishoomis - Grandfather
Memengwaan - Butterfly
Wiin Ntam - his/her turn
Nengaach - Slow Down
Gindan - Read it
Tisge - to Colour

hello
SUMMER

Aki - Earth
Ogaa - Walleye
Saawe - Perch
Waawan - Egg
Biidaabin - First Light
Waaban - Dawn
Gizhebaagook - Morning
Giizhgate - Daytime
Ehbangishmok - Setting Sun
Zhkwaingishmok - Dusk

Answer Key





Shki Waase-Aaban Binoojiinh Gamik

3042 New Subdivision Road

P.O. Box 2004

Sagamok, Ontario

POP 2L0

Manager: Rachel Toulouse

Phone: 705-865-1180



Biidaaban Kinoomaagegamik

1666 Toulouse Bay Road

PO Box 2217

Sagamok, ON

POP 2L0

Principal: Becky Toulouse

Phone: 705-865-2387



Lifelong Learning Centre

717 Sagamok Road,

Sagamok, ON

POP 2M0

Manager: Claudette Fournier-Jones

Phone: 705-865-2421



Education Supports

Infrastructure

Student Resource Services

Land Based Learning, Literacy, Numeracy

Busing / Transportation

Leadership Team