Community Grant Program

2022 Spring & Summer Impact Report

TrueNorthAid
Program Overview

The True North Aid Community Grant program (CGP) is a multi-tiered funding program supporting Indigenous-led projects in northern and remote communities in Canada that aim to create positive and impactful community-centred change.

Project Focuses

- Advancement of education, cultural revitalization, and community-building
- Equitable access to essential resources
- Reclaiming plant/food sovereignty
- Promotion of holistic physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being
- Addressing housing inequalities

Funding Streams

True North Aid will provide funding of up to $50,000 toward projects that empower communities with wholistic and sustainable projects.

- **Bear Funding Stream**
  - Funding of up to $5,000
- **Buffalo Funding Stream**
  - Funding of up to $15,000
- **Turtle Funding Stream**
  - Funding of up to $25,000
- **Eagle Funding Stream**
  - Funding of up to $50,000

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Highlights

A total of:

$445,656.24

15 Grants Approved

1070-1400 Beneficiaries Reached

11 New Partnerships Created

Program Locations

2x Northwest Territories
8x Saskatchewan
4x Manitoba
1x Ontario
Indigenous Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is a collective of members with Indigenous heritage who possess varied backgrounds in diverse programs similar to the projects funded by the CGP. Membership diversity includes geographic region, identities, orientation(s), age, education, and lived experiences. The Indigenous Advisory Committee (IAC) meets to collectively review Community Grant applications for the purpose of identifying successful grant recipients. The IAC additionally serves in an advisory capacity to True North Aid’s Community Grant Program and provides additional capacity-building to recipient community groups.

Dwight Ballantyne

Dwight Ballantyne grew up in Montreal Lake Cree Nation, a remote north Saskatchewan First Nation, until the age of 21 when he moved to BC in 2016. In an effort to raise awareness about what life is like for youth who grow up in remote Indigenous communities, Dwight founded The Ballantyne Project in 2019. He is passionate about sharing the truth about Canada’s history, the effects of Residential schools and bridging the gap between youth living in remote First Nations and the rest of Canada.

Lynda Gerow

Lynda Gerow is from the Wet’suwet’en Nation in Burns Lake, British Columbia. Her teachings are mostly Anishinaabe and Mohawk. Mukade Miiagan is her spirit name which means Black Wolfe. Lynda recently accepted the position of Support Worker/Cultural Coordinator with Tipi Moza in Kingston, Ontario, in addition to working in the community to re-learn traditional languages and educate youth. She is currently the President of the Kingston Thunder Women (Ontario Native Women’s Association Chapter). Lynda also sits with the CFS agency’s Keweywin Circle, whose focus is to reunite children with their families and culture. Lynda and her partner Tracy are mothers to four grown children and tota/kookom to five grandsons and one granddaughter. They are both firekeepers and powwow dancers. Together, they are building a life centre around their traditional ways of knowing and being.
Kerry Spence is an Ojibway-Métis woman from Eddystone, Manitoba. She is a member of Lake Manitoba First Nation and is currently residing in Winnipeg, Manitoba with her two children. She studied Human Nutritional Sciences and Native Studies at the University of Manitoba and has a special interest in learning about Indigenous culture and food sovereignty. She brings her experience working in a charitable organization, in which she supported community-led projects looking to either create, strengthen or expand local food systems. She is excited to apply what she has learned in the philanthropic and food sovereignty sectors and to continue to work with communities in a good way.

Leo Atlookan
Leo Atlookan is a father, grandfather, brother, son and husband from Eabametoong First Nation in northern Ontario (Fort Hope). His given First Nation name is Stand Alone Strong. Leo works at John C. Yesno Education Centre in Fort Hope as the social counsellor. He enjoys being out at his camp where he can go hunting and fishing to help provide for his family. He also enjoys playing sports, coaching boys and girls hockey clubs, and dances as a traditional dancer at powwows. Leo went to school in Fort Hope from grades 1 to 8, attended high school in thunder bay and pursued a counselling degree at Laurentian University in Sudbury. Leo spends much of his time in Fort Hope but travels to Toronto to visit his wife’s family and is a proud Dog-Dad of Banjo.

Karhinéhtha’ Cortney Clark
Karhinéhtha’ Cortney Clark is Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk, People of the flint), Bear clan and member of Wahta Mohawk Territory. She works as the Indigenous Recruitment and Student Advisor for Academic Health Sciences and Professional programs situated in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office, at Queen's Health Sciences. She represents higher education program efforts to actualize the TRC Calls to Action, in Federal government policy discourses, relating to ongoing Indigenous health education advances in health and educational spheres. Karhinéhtha’/ Cortney is currently the Associate Chair for the National Consortium of Indigenous Medical Education – Admissions and Transitions working group. She is also currently a full-time student in the Doctor of Science Rehabilitation and Health Leadership program at Queen’s Health Sciences. Her research focus is on reconciliation efforts through the integration of Indigenous medicines and healing practices with the Western- biomedical model of health sciences to promote overall decolonization within the healthcare system.
Grantee Spotlights

Enhancement for Prenatal Doula Program

Eagle Funding Stream

Misipawistik Cree Nation, Grand Rapids, MB

Through a variety of projects, this program offers both support and mentorship for expecting and postpartum mothers within the community. They provide essentials for mother and baby, such as diapers, bottles, maxi pads, breast pumps, Enfamil milk, and more.

This program is also committed to cultural revitalization. Through workshops and teachings, this program is fostering kinship, creating community bonds, and restoring traditional knowledge and birthing practices.

Program Includes:

- Baby Basket Delivery
- Hospital Travel Bag for Mother
- Monthly Food Vouchers
- Meals on Wheels Service
- Procurement of Enfamil Milk
- Cultural Revitalizing Workshops

"It is a core value that the health and wellbeing of our women is essential to who we are as a Nation."
Wapaw Canoe Project

Pelican Narrows, SK

This program purchased canoes for the community to use recreationally and for summer events. This has provided youth the opportunity to learn a new skill while enlightening traditional and cultural ways of life.

"When the lakes are peaceful the canoes are used immensely, my community has a great passion for paddling. We all still keep the tradition alive by teaching the younger generations about the importance of the canoe."
- Band Councillor, Sarah Swan

Ebb and Flow Food Bank

Ebb and Flow First Nation, MB

This program was started by a family who recognized the great need within their community and took action by creating a food bank. The purpose is to provide necessities, such as baby items and food, to less fortunate families. Along with the food bank, this program will initiate a community garden, a sports program, and partner with the daycare and school to create a breakfast program for the kids.

"No kid should be without food."

Eagle Funding Stream

Turtle Funding Stream
Lakeview Community School’s Eagle Moon Literacy Olympics

Bear Funding Stream
Cole Bay, SK

This program ran a six-week reading and physical activity challenge for kids in the community. Activities included community engagement days, literacy nights, community meals, Olympic games, prizes, and a Scholastic Reading Fair.

"It was really moving to hand out these awards. One student in particular (who had a reading disability), worked SO HARD all year, won a medal and yelled out to his mom, ‘Mom! I did it!’ It was beautiful!"
- Alexandra MacLean

Summer Fun

Bear Funding Stream
Jans Bay, SK

This program provided summer supplies to families in remote communities, who otherwise would not be able to afford them. 25 Summer Fun Kits with swimming pools, hoses, sprinklers and outdoor toys were given out as well as 25 BBQ Hamper Kits with burgers, hotdogs, buns, potatoes, and s’mores.
From Land to Plate

Turnor Lake & Birch Narrows, SK

This program is keeping tradition strong by taking youth back to the land to teach them how to hunt and prepare meals sustainably. Youth learn from the Elders about their traditional lands and how they were used to provide for the community.

Hope for Colville Lake

Colville Lake, NT

This program's purpose is to address the root cause of intergenerational trauma within the community that has resulted in a pattern of substance abuse. With the help of trained counsellors and elders, this project teaches the community about the impacts, symptoms and healing strategies related to trauma.

Elder and Youth Cultural Interaction

Treaty 10 Traditional Territory, Beauval, SK

This program aims to provide moral and spiritual support to youth, as they face many challenges today. Elder-led land-based learning and traditional teachings are used to provide healing and strengthen elder and youth cultural connections.

Barren Lands True North Group

Barren Lands First Nation, Brochet, MB

This program uses workshops to teach youth important cultural and life skills. The goal is to build positive self-esteem and a sense of cultural and personal belonging, in order to prevent suicides and enable youth to become future leaders.

Learn to Play Lacrosse

Big River First Nation, Shellbrook, SK

This program teaches lacrosse to youth within the community and provides a safe space to learn new skills. Through sports, this program challenges youth physically, mentally and socially and prepares them to be future leaders of the community.
CAMP - Northern Saskatchewan Music Program

This program fills the gap of a lack of music programs in northern Saskatchewan communities. By coordinating with local musicians, it is providing students the opportunity to explore their love of music and learn a new skill from local experts.

Cat Lake Community Events Shelter

This program is creating a community gathering space, including building pavilions to provide shelter from the weather. This will allow the community to host events like sports activities, cook-outs and traditional gatherings.

Community Nutrition

This program is providing health education to the community, while making a healthier lifestyle more accessible with a community garden. The goals are to prevent diabetes in youth, educate the community on nutrition, promote physical activity and ensure food security.

One House, Many Nations

This program addresses systemic causes of homelessness by working with the community to build and design small houses for 1 to 2 people to live in. This program also engages in workshops to teach youth design and carpentry skills.

Sahtu Youth Summer Program

This program takes students on canoe trips throughout the Sahtu region, with opportunities for cultural experiences with local Elders. This provides students with the skills and certifications to be able to begin a career in the environmental sector.
Congratulations to all of True North Aid's grantees for all their hard work!

To learn more about True North Aid's community program, please email grants@truenorthaid.ca