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The True North Aid Reconciliation Grant Program is a multi-tiered funding program supporting projects that work to foster positive relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. True North Aid seeks to bridge the divide between diverse communities while working towards improving livelihoods and propelling reconciliation efforts.

**Program Overview**

**Funding Streams**

- **Memory Stream**
  - Funding of up to $2,500

- **Footprint Stream**
  - Funding of up to $5,000

- **Legacy Stream**
  - Funding of up to $25,000

- **Roots Stream**
  - Funding of up to $15,000

**Project Focuses**

- Respect and responsibility for diversity, inclusion and/or accessibility
- Community-centred programming and/or training partnerships
- Meaningful intercultural exchanges
- Allyship advocacy
- Systemic/organizational response to one or more of the 94 Calls to Action
- Anti-Indigenous racism and/or cultural awareness
- Language and/or cultural revitalization
- Leadership development
- Increasing awareness about the ongoing impacts of Indian Residential Schools with attention to the most northern and remote regions and territories

True North Aid provides funding of up to $25,000 toward projects that advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.
Highlights

A total of:

$144,090.00

7 Grants Approved in 2021

600 Beneficiaries Reached

4 New Partnerships Created

Program Locations

1x Nunavut
1x British Columbia
1x Alberta
2x Manitoba
2x Ontario
Reconcili-Action Advisory Committee

The Reconcili-Action Advisory Committee meets to collectively choose the successful grant recipients. It is comprised of 6 members who are either of Indigenous heritage or a proven ally. The committee members have varying backgrounds and experiences with reconciliation projects and they use this knowledge to both select and guide the chosen grant recipients as mentors.

Joseph Sagaj

Joseph Sagaj is from a remote and isolated community called Neskantaga in northern Ontario. He attended the Ontario College of Art & Design and graduated in 1985. In 1992, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples selected Joseph’s logo as a winning design resulting in numerous private and public commissions designing logos, painting murals, and illustrating for publications.

Some commissions include: Indian & Northern Affairs Canada's for “The 13 Moons” Day-Planner; the Ministry of the Attorney General, Aboriginal Justice Division for a painting series the “Seven Stages of Life”, and for Seneca College designing 9 meter (30-foot) diameter floor installation entitled “Circle of Indigenous Knowledge” This beautiful, symbolic, complex assemblage of designs has since won awards in Canada and the United States in the Terrazzo Industry, as well as it being featured in numerous articles.

Joseph’s involvement with children and youth in the arts includes: the Early-On Indigenous Language and Family Program at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto; First Nations Youth ENAGB; the Matawa Educational Centre in Thunder Bay, painting a mural with students, that made front page news in Thunders Bay’s Chronicle which brought pride to the youth; Joseph has also gone back to Neskantaga to do art with children in mask-making. In 2015, Joseph initiated “The Northern Lights Collective”, a donation drive that provides art supplies, books, sports, and camping equipment to remote communities. This is an accomplishment shared by many donors, artists, friends, as well as organizations, and businesses.

Throughout Joseph’s 30-year career, Joseph has emphasized his heritage and featured Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and stories at the forefront. He credits the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Ceremonies, and the “Ways of the People” with great pride that is reflected in his art and in showcasing it to the world!
Patty Krawec

Patty Krawec is an Anishinaabe/Ukrainian writer and speaker from Lac Seul First Nation. She serves on the board of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Center and is active with the Strong Water Singers. She is the cohost of the Medicine for the Resistance podcast and cofounder of the Nii’kinaaganaa Foundation, which collects funds and disperses them to Indigenous people and organizations. Her work has been published in Sojourners and Canadian Living as well as Rampant Magazine and Midnight Sun and she posts podcasts and essays with some regularity on her substack, pattykrawec.substack.com.

Her book, Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future will be published in September by Broadleaf Books and is now available for pre-order. Krawec attends Chippawa Presbyterian Church and lives in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Find her online at daanis.ca

Kathryn Vilela

Kathryn Vilela is a settler living in Kingston, Ontario. She was born and raised in rural Northwestern Ontario, spending her childhood in the fields, forests, and creeks in the Rainy Lake/Lake of the Woods region. Her family's home was just a few kilometers from Manitou Rapids Reservation, and yet it wasn't until early adulthood that she realized how little she knew of her Ojibway neighbours. She is on a learning journey to understand and acknowledge the harmful and racist systems that form the foundations of her country, to know when to speak up to advocate for change in any way she can, to know when to be quiet and humbly learn from the insight and experience of Indigenous people, and to help her own children grow up with more awareness and appreciation of Indigenous history than she had.

Kathryn works at Queen’s University as an academic advisor and a volunteer manager. She teaches a certificate program in the theory and practice of volunteer engagement for Queen’s staff and student leaders, and she is passionate about enabling healthy and fulfilling volunteerism. Kathryn is an artist and a singer, plays a bit of piano, and is an avid novel-reader. She is happiest in a green forest.
Michael Amesse

Michael Amesse has been volunteering with True North Aid since 2018 as a project lead for Northern Health Initiatives. He has directed the procurement of incontinence products, mobility aids, and wound care services while travelling to and from northern reserves. Michael has always promoted practical “boots on the ground” projects and local leadership regarding all of True North Aid’s programs. As a Personal Care Attendant working at Kingston General Hospital internal medicine unit, Michael understands and aims to overcome the complexities and obstacles regarding the north and its access to adequate health care. He continues to volunteer across a range of different True North Aid projects and as an ambassador on behalf of the charity when visiting communities across Canada. His time is also spent volunteering with a local wild animal rescue and sanctuary; Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre.

Ursula Holcroft

Ursula Holcroft is a young woman from Eabametoong First Nation. Ursula attends college in Toronto. She is accomplished, excelling in both academics and athletics. Living in both remote and urban environments, Ursula’s understanding of the issues that affect Indigenous youth and her understanding of how creative initiatives can inspire young people provides a unique perspective for the committee to consider.

Jane Arychuk

Jane Arychuk joins us with over thirty years experience in Education in the NWT. Starting her teaching career in Fort Providence, she has touched lives from preschool to post secondary.

Since leaving the position of President, Aurora College, Jane has established a successful engraving and educational consulting business and pursued volunteer opportunities to support children youth and Indigenous Communities in the NWT.
Fort Chipewyan is a small isolated community that is only accessible to the mainland 3 months a year on a winter ice road. Many of the youth grow up without ever experiencing life outside of their community.

This program gave 9 youth the opportunity to travel to Vancouver, BC and participate in new experiences. Through this initiative, the youth expanded their network, learned about different cultures and traditions, and discovered new possibilities for their future.

**Experiences Included:**
- First time on a commercial aircraft (for most)
- Exploring Capilano University Campus
- Laser tag
- Riding Rode Fly Over Canada at Canada Place
- Rock Climbing
- Taking in the view at Lonsdale Quay
- Tour of Skwachays Lodge and Gallery
- Vancouver Aquarium
- Visiting an ancestral village site
Maamwi Bmosedaa - Walking in Unity

This program partners with Endaayaan Awejaa, a local volunteer-led initiative that supports youth in the community through artistic programming and the provision of basic necessities. These workshops, focused on the areas of arts and culture, reconciliation, education and harm reduction, provide a safe outlet for the youth to express themselves.

Endaayaan Awejaa believes that through creative expression, Indigenous youth gain transferable skills which will help them be successful in other areas of their life. These skills include problem-solving, observation, discipline, self-expression, organizational, self appreciation, and courage.

The First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba

In response to Indigenous youth's feedback detailing their experiences in mistreatment, microaggressions, and stereotyping in the healthcare system, the FNHSSM created an 8-week anti-racism training program targeted at health care professionals. This grant is being used to create a series of videos that will be used both to supplement this training and raise awareness about racism within the Canadian health care sector. The video topics include:

- What is racism, how to seek support if you experienced racism in health care
- Experiences of racism to supplement anti-racism training
- Description of anti-racism training and the promotion of FHNSSM's work.
Reconcili-Action Between Inuit Youth and Non-Inuit Health Care Providers

This program promotes reconciliation between Inuit youth, Elders and non-Inuit health care providers through trips on the land that engage in fishing, hunting and sharing circles. This program allows non-Inuit health care workers to learn about the continued impacts of colonization, with the hope that it will strengthen relationships, diminish prejudice, build trust and improve the quality of health care.

Residential School Survivors: Honouring the Memory

This initiative is creating an immersive Augmented Reality exhibit that brings to life the tragic history of Canada's residential schools. This interactive experience both increases awareness about the history and legacy of Canada's First Nations residential schools and honours the memory of the residential school warriors.

Danowh'yeah: Witsuwit'en Video Project

This knowledge sharing program provides Indigenous awareness training for new businesses in the community through a short documentary on the Witsuwit'en People. The objective is to reduce systematic racism towards Indigenous people by fostering a greater understanding of the Witsuwit'en people and their culture.

ReconciliACTION 2022 in Treaty 2 Territory

This initiative hosts educational awareness events for non-Indigenous peoples on the history and culture of Indigenous peoples. Through history lessons, traditional teachings, and cultural demonstrations, attendees gain a greater understanding of the trials, tribulations and resiliency of Indigenous peoples.
Congratulations to all of True North Aid's grantees for all their hard work!

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

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