



Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiliyag
Child & Family Services

**2020/2021
Annual Report**

This report is dedicated to all the children who attended Indian Residential Schools, their families, communities and Nations. We honour all of those binnoojiiyag, those who have been recovered in unmarked grave sites across Turtle Island, those still to be recovered and those who never made their way home.

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About the cover design

The illustration is inspired by Pinadash’eshkodeyang, known today as the area of rice lake.

There was a time before colonization that the Anishinaabeg gave each place its own distinct name. Pinadash’eshkodeyang is the area of Rice Lake. When we look at Rice Lake prior to contact it was a bounty of sustenance for the First Nation’s people particularly due to the manoomin (wild rice) that grew there. If you take a minute to imagine a wheat field this lake was plentiful and rich with wild rice. Many people describe this as the “lake of the burning plains” because of the prescribed burns by the Anishinaabeg year after year to ensure ecological restoration. Pinadash’eshkodeyang talks about the stewardship that is tied to this area. Like many Nations, the Anishinaabeg’s value system is based on reciprocity. This included the relationship to Akikwe (mother earth). The knowledge of the land and the care that was taken to ensure seasonal re-growth is an important lesson to begin to engage with in present day. Getting back to land-based knowledge and understanding the true history of each territory highlights the importance of names as well as informing the next generations of caretakers. In Anishinaabeg culture names give purpose and instructions. This holds true when we are looking at the original names across Turtle Island (North America).

Knowledge shared by Ishkode Tim Smoke

Transcribed by Ziigwanbinesii Charles



OPENING REMARKS

From Chief Laurie Carr, Board Chair and
Amber Crowe, Executive Director



First, let us take a moment to celebrate our people, communities and Nations for successfully navigating a global pandemic. This past year challenged us in more ways than one but more than anything else, it challenged us to go inward and reconnect with ourselves as Indigenous people, our traditional ways of knowing and being.

Before all else, the safety, health and well-being of children, youth, families and communities, our staff, caregivers and volunteers were of utmost importance. We are incredibly proud of our family of staff who came together, in a time of crisis, and took the necessary steps to affect change across the entire agency adapting to the ever-changing environments. They did so with great strength and ease – a testament to their commitment to all those we work alongside.

Although many of our services and programs transitioned to a virtual delivery, our position as an essential service provider allowed us to maintain in-person service following provincial, community and agency-issued health and safety procedures. Following our wholistic service model, we did not compromise on Sàgìhidig Family Time. The necessary measures were put into place to ensure that families continued to have face-to-face time with one another.

In response to the disproportionate impact felt

by Indigenous families, we supported over 1,000 families with food hampers, winter supplements, and gift cards. COVID-19 exposed the digital divide – issues of connectivity and accessibility emerged as we transitioned to a virtual world for most aspects of our lives. Keeping this mind, we provided computers, tablets and cell phones configured with data packages to families to support e-learning and to maintain connection with loved ones.

We continued to grow as a multi-service agency. This past year, we introduced two new prevention-based services – education and nursing – adding to our multi-service distinction. It fills our hearts to be able to offer culturally-intelligent programs and services to children, youth and families, ones that honour our Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

To support these additional services and the ongoing transfers (just shy of 200) from our mainstream children's aid society (CAS) partners, we explored new ways to attract, recruit and onboard qualified staff. As of March 31, 2021, we are just 50 staff away from a full complement - a tremendous accomplishment considering we have doubled in size in just two short years.

We further developed our employee well-being plan, adding two recognition programs and a new

wholistic review process. Vibin' the Values encourages staff to recognize their colleagues for upholding our values; the Solstice Awards is a quarterly nomination-based recognition program; and the Quarterly Wholistic Reviews support good, strong connection between staff and supervisors. One of the greatest lessons we learned this past year is that we must look after our whole selves (mind, body and spirit) in order to care for and support children, youth and families. We must be at our best in order to do our best.

We also made significant changes to our infrastructure including new office locations, innovative digital solutions, policies, processes and procedures. We opened two new office locations, relocated one and procured 10 sets of playground equipment for outdoor community spaces across our service area. We reconfigured our file sharing system to better support remote logins and access. We continue to engage community partners, developing new protocols and service agreements.

We came together as an agency, and it was the collective strength that propelled us through the pandemic. We discovered new ways to gather,

share and practice ceremony, some of which we will continue with on the other side of the pandemic, but nothing replaces human connection. We look forward to gathering in person soon.

Until then, take good care and bamaapii.



COVID RESPONSE

April 1, 2020, marked just two and half weeks into the pandemic and the start of a new fiscal year. At that time, our Director of Human Resources called together a Pandemic/Service Continuity Team consisting of senior leaders within the Agency.

Over the course of the year, the internal group met, at minimum, twice per month to discuss developments and strategize appropriate responses to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all staff, children, youth, families, alternative caregivers, communities and Nations.

Externally, various staff participated in regional and community-based pandemic response committees to ensure consistent messaging flowing to and from the Agency.

Executive Director, Amber Crowe participated in the OACAS-led COVID Task Force. Key areas of focus included residential services, equity, youth and service delivery, and vaccination planning and roll out. The group advocated frequently, and usually successfully, to change approach, policy, and practice to improve outcomes during the pandemic for children, youth, and families in Ontario.¹

There were no workplace spreads of COVID. No employee contracted COVID-19 at work or in the course of their duties.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

¹ OACAS (2021). OACAS 2020-2021 Annual Report: Navigating Toward A Reimagined Child Welfare System. <http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/OACAS-Annual-Report-2021-EN.pdf>

A smaller working group formed early in the fiscal year to coordinate the procurement and delivery of PPE for staff, children, youth, families and alternative caregivers.

By the end of the year, innovative solutions were introduced and made available.

VACCINATION ROLLOUT

In March 2021, a Vaccine Rollout Working Group was formed to strategize a vaccine program for staff, children, youth and families. Note: there are six public health units (PHUs) within our service area.

The Working Group met weekly to discuss the everchanging provincial and local direction regarding vaccines and developed a coordinated approach to engage all six PHUs, ensuring consistency as much as possible for staff, children, youth and families.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Face masks, including custom-fitted N95 masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes
- Bioesque Botanical Disinfectant Solution
- Victory Backpack Sprayer
- Plexi-glass dividers for vehicles

COVID PROTOCOLS

- Online Screening prior to office visits
- Temperature checks upon arrival
- Masks at all times
- Maintain 6-foot distance
- COVID-specific health & safety training of all staff and alternative caregivers
- Rotational schedule (in office) to reduce risk
- Office equipment to work from home
- Cleaning protocols for offices and vehicles



Victory Backpack Sprayer filled with Bioesque Botanical Disinfectant Solution is used to sanitize all common areas (Sāgihidig Family Rooms and Board Rooms) after each use.



CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

PROTECTION SERVICES

Over the past year, 196 cases were transferred from our five local partner Children’s Aid Societies (CAS).

We experienced another year of rapid growth and development. Approximately 1,673 cases were opened (including reopened cases) over the year. We worked closely with each child, youth, family and their community or Nation to provide optimal service, caring for their emotional, spiritual, mental and physical health. 1,126 cases remained open at year’s end.



We received 1,050 calls to initial assessment. Of those calls, 916 investigations were made and only 21% or 200 resulted in a case opening.

We supported approximately 1,100 families with food baskets, gift cards, and winter supplements.

Most of the open legal files were a result of transfers from our partner CASSs. Over the year, we launched 39 protection applications and closed 31 court files, opting for Customary Care Agreements in many.

Since designation, we have yet to take any

matters to trial. In some instances, cases were resolved through summary judgement motions.

ALTERNATIVE CARE

We celebrated a milestone of 60 total approved homes - a new record! Over the year, we opened 22 homes. Of those homes, 10 were customary care homes, 8 were kin in care homes and the remaining 4 were community care homes. We also secured 85 placements for children and youth.

We developed a quality training program for alternative caregivers. In total, over 1,000 participants attended 75 training opportunities. Participants ranged from caregivers working alongside our agency, other Indigenous Child & Family Well-Being Agencies, local Children’s Aid Societies (CASSs) and Outside Paid Resources.

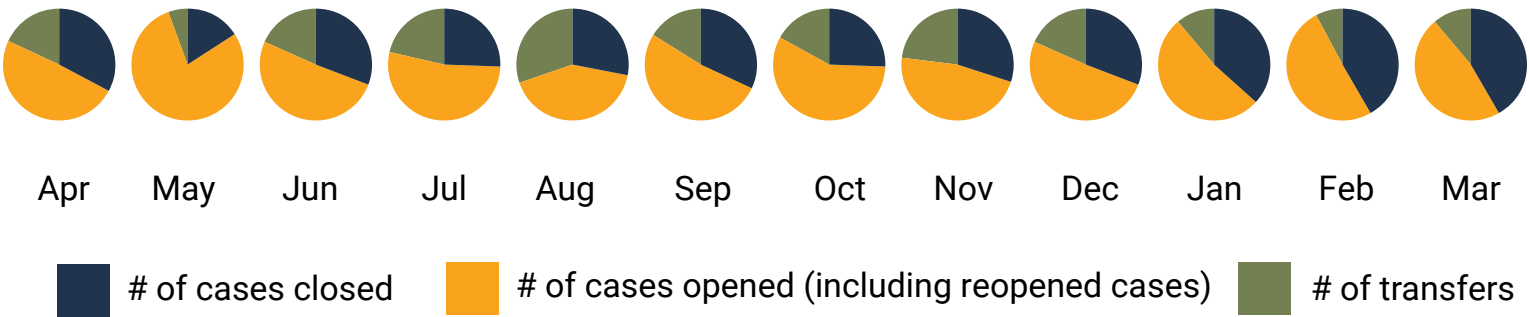
We hired Reintegration Workers and developed a cutting-edge reintegration program. Reintegration Workers are supporting children and youth to (re) establish and (re)build connections to (re)claim a permanent place as part of their extended family, community, and culture.

We initiated Provider Support Groups that are run by providers and supported by a staff liaison and a steering committee

In October, we celebrated our alternative caregivers at our inaugural annual recognition event, with over 80 participants.

Lastly, we implemented the Heart & Spirit training and PRIDE pre-service training for the very first time!

Case Opening vs. Closing



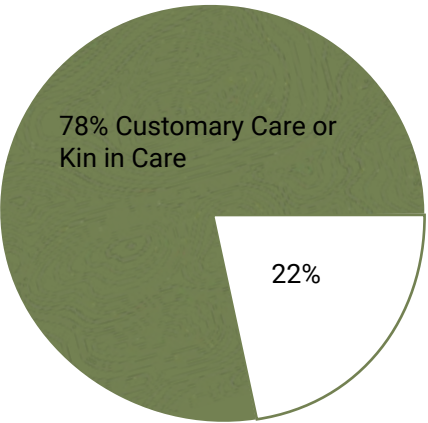
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children and youth returned to family homes (grandparents, aunties, uncles, older siblings)

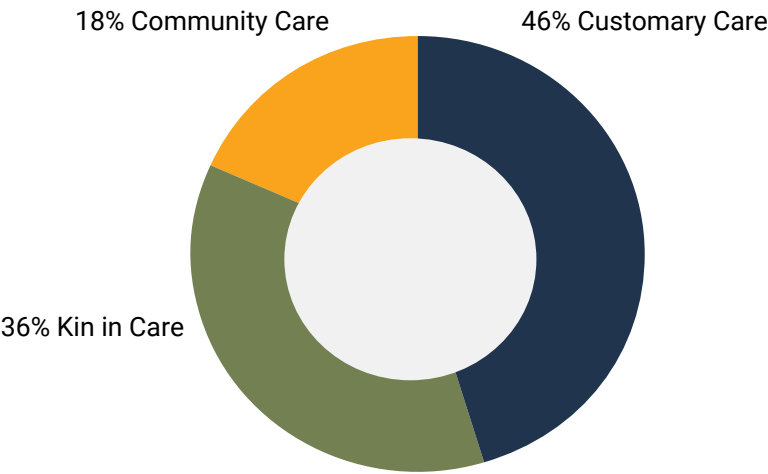
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children and youth returned to their biological parents homes.

Children/Youth Served by Family-Based Care



Types of Homes Opened



CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

CULTURAL SERVICES

Cultural programming shifted and was delivered via virtual technologies to protect the safety and well-being of children, youth and families.

Although unconventional and not our traditional way, we were able to reach and connect with more children, youth and families from within our service area and even those living outside of it.

We received over 590 referrals for cultural support. Of those, 462 referrals directly served children, youth, families and communities, the remaining supported staff - 298 were for Cultural Resource Advisors, 147 were for Circle Facilitators, 17 for Elders/Knowledge Keepers. The remaining referrals received were to provide support and care to staff.

We hosted over 4,000 events including but not limited to, 1:1 sessions, Ceremonies, Circles, traditional teachings, as well as training and meeting support. Of these events, 2,107 were provided to children, youth and families and 2,077 were provided to our organization including staff and partner agencies/organizations.

In the summer of 2020, we offered our first ever virtual summer cultural camp. A total of 26 children and youth participated. Various activities were offered throughout the week for children and youth 6-9 years and 10-13 years. The groups made dream catchers, hand drums, painted, played language games, listened to teachings and participated in ceremony.

During - what was scheduled to be - March

Break, we hosted evening activities suitable for the entire family called Family Wellness Week. Activities included cooking classes, painting, crafting and special guest speaker, Theland Kicknosway who shared the history of hoop dancing and his own life experiences of how his culture has helped him stay on a good track and live mino bimaadziwin (a good life).

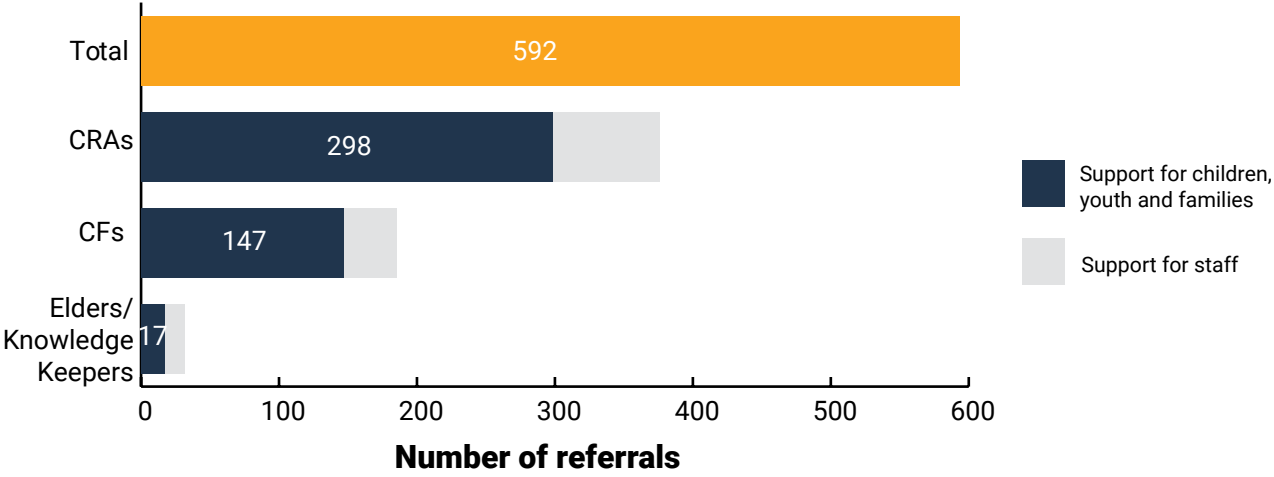
We closed out the fiscal year with three sacred fires - one for each region. The fires provided staff with an opportunity (as per covid restrictions) to offer semma (tobacco) and prayers for healing and strength to get through the pandemic.



Two youth I was working with struggled to make hand drums virtually so when things opened up, I made the trip to Nepean, ON to help them make their hand drums & sticks. I shared teachings about drums and drum making, we connected and got to know another talking about belonging and the importance of Identity & Pride. As you can see (in photo below), they were very proud of their new sacred items and couldn't stop thanking me for coming to see them! - Julie Bothwell, Cultural Resource Advisor



Cultural Services Referrals



CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

NURSING

The nursing support program launched in January of 2021. It aims to provide clinical support to new and expecting parents, caregivers and families.

Two Health Nurses were recruited during the last quarter of the fiscal year covering East and West Regions while sharing responsibilities in the Central Region. From January to March 2021, both nurses combined provided support to over 28 families.

Nurses, in collaboration with the Cultural Services team, put together bundle items consisting of tikanagans, moss bags, baby rattles and other cultural items to support our Binnoojiiyag - all made with love from crafters in our communities.



MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

The Child & Youth Mental Health & Addictions program is supported by eight workers (CYMHAWs), each located in one of our eight First Nations. Over the year, the program supported 151 children and youth.

In February 2021, we introduced the Eagles' Nest

- a group for children and youth that focuses on mental health and well-being. About 20 participants (ages 4 - 17 years) joined the first sessions.

YOUTH JUSTICE - ONDAASHI DEBWEWIN

The Youth Justice program was gifted the name Ondaashi Debwewin which translates to their voices being carried through the air, like the wind, when they speak their truth. It is recognized that youth have a story and they need support in speaking their truth. Such a fitting name for our Youth Justice program that supports youth who are going through some challenges and require support in navigating the youth justice system.

During the past year, the program supported 13 youth. Youth Justice Coordinators continued to raise awareness of the program by providing community presentations.

FAMILY FINDING

The Family Finding program supported over 33 families reconnecting with their loved ones.



A father was reconnected with his two children after years of being apart. Through wraparound care and support, both children are now having regular contact with dad. Both children rave about how much they love their dad and how supportive he is. - Family Finder

EDUCATION LIAISON PROGRAM

In late Winter of 2021, the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services announced enhanced funding to support new roles, Education Liaisons in Child & Family Well-Being Agencies and Children's Aid Societies across the province.

Through this funding, we provided cultural learning resources to over 350 families. Resources included age-appropriate Indigenous books and novels, tablets to support e-learning and additional learning materials.



MEMBER FIRST NATIONS AND PARTNERS

These partnerships serve to protect and honour the safety, well-being and cultural preservation of our children, youth, families, communities and Nations.

MEMBER FIRST NATIONS



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors came together six times over the course of the year.

Chief Laurie Carr, <i>Chair</i> Hiawatha First Nation	Leanne McRae-Douglas, <i>Vice-Chair</i> Chippewas of Rama First Nation	Laura Colwell, <i>Secretary-Treasurer</i> Scugog Island First Nation
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Tina Howard Hiawatha First Nation	Chief Donna Big Canoe Georgina Island First Nation	Chief Baron King Moose Deer Point First Nation
Nora Sawyer Alderville First Nation	Chief Joanne Sandy Beausoleil First Nation	Myrna Burnside Moose Deer Point First Nation
Taynar Simpson Alderville First Nation	Guy Monague Beausoleil First Nation	Shilene Williams Chippewas of Rama First Nation
Shannon Crate Georgina Island First Nation		Teresa Greasley Wahta Mohawks

LOCAL PARTNER CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES



ASSOCIATIONS



COMMUNITY TABLES

Collectively, our staff are a part of nearly 100 community groups, tables and committees alike. We represent and carry the voices of the children, youth and families we walk alongside. We give a voice to those who may not always be given an opportunity to be heard. Representation matters and we are committed to advocacy to further our mandate and vision.

Community Groups/Tables/Committees

5CAS Adopt Transition 5CAS Alt Care Transition ANCFSAO LGBT2SQ Committee ANCFSAO Ministry Initiative Redesign ANCFSAO Residential Services ANCFSAO Youth in Transition/HSW committee Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group Best Start Committee Biinoojiiysauk Committee Binnoojiiyag Committee Birth Alert Cessation Committee Child Abuse Registry (CART) at Durham CAS Central Zone Meetings (various groups) Centralized Intake Committee Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Children at Risk of Exploitation Units Implementation Group Collaborate Barrie Board Complex Mental Health Needs Table Child Welfare Redesign Community Partners in Diversity Community Safety Roundtable Debwewin Committee Data Governance Strategy DRAAC – Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle Durham and York Ontario Education Championship Team Durham CARES Durham Children's Aid Society Local Transition Durham Connect Durham Family Court Clinic Committee Durham Region Anti-Human Trafficking CARE Durham Region Priority Health Neighbourhoods Durham Region School Protocol Collaboration Committee Durham Regional Children and Youth Integrated Planning Committee Early Intervention Orillia Network Meeting Eastern Zone Meetings (various groups) Eastern Zone CPIN Leads Committee Ending Homelessness Working Group FASD Leads Committee FN OIS Report GTA Residential Resource Directors GTA Resources Group Hastings Situation Table Highland Shores Children's Aid Society Local Transition Indigenous Circle Meeting Indigenous Peoples' Court Steering Committee Indigenous School Board Advisory Circle Infant and Early Mental Health Pathways Committee Infant Mental Health Development and Practice Leads Committee Interagency Placement Group	Kawartha Haliburton CAS Equity Committee Kawartha Haliburton CAS Local Transition Kawartha Haliburton Situation Table Kinship Managers Network Group Kinship Managers Provincial Network LGBTQ2S+ Committee with OACAS Live In Treatment Admission Priority Process (LIT APP) Managers Provincial Family Find Group OACAS/ANCFSAO - Provincial Kinship Services Group OACAS/ANCFSAO - Provincial Residential Services Group OACAS BOD OACAS Board Governance OACAS COVID-19 Task Force OETC Education Ombudsman Committee OMC High Risk Round Table OPS Committee Peterborough Planning Table for Children and Youth Pre natal Advisory Circle in Durham Prenatal Network Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Indigenous Community & Social Development Program at Georgian College Project Hope Committee Provider Support Group Provincial Communications Network Provincial FASD Community of Practice Provincial Human Trafficking Committee Quinte Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (Q.A.H.T.C.) Recruitment and Retention Committee Region 6 Adopt Group Residential Services Committee Resource Managers Provincial Network Simcoe County Best Start Committee Simcoe County Coordinated Service Planning Steering Committee Simcoe-Muskoka Family Connexions Local Transition Simcoe County FASD Advisory Committee Situation Table SPC/KSS York Region State of Affairs SUUPC Committee TLDSB Indigenous Advisory Committee Tripartite Technical Table Transportation and Stability Education Committee VAW/CAS Steering Committee York Coordinated Service Planning Steering Committee York FASD York Region Centralized Intake York Region Children's Aid Society Local Transition YORK U Assessment/HT Committee
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OUR PEOPLE

We continue to depend on a skilled and committed team of people that includes staff, senior leadership, volunteers and alternative caregivers.

STAFF

Over the year, we hired 63 new staff including turnovers, a 14% growth from the previous year's end and more than double (2.2x) from two years prior.

We had 291 staff as of March 31, 2021, 80% of whom self-identified as Indigenous or affiliated.

In addition to ongoing recruitment efforts, we strengthened our employee well-being efforts. Caring for our whole selves (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual) ensures that we can provide optimal service, nurture and care for children, youth and families.

We launched two new employee recognition programs (Vibin' the Values and the Solstice Awards), a Wholistic Review Process, and some great wellness initiatives for staff to participate in which included information sessions, a gratitude journey and a walking challenge.



Over the past year I have seen my work family, work tirelessly for the families, youth and children we work alongside. They have had to be creative at times arranging visits adhering to restrictions. They made sure the children, youth and families had the technology they needed to stay connected. When children and youth needed to stay home from school, workers made sure

everyone had the food and supplies they needed. We had a food drive, gave out Food Hampers and Grocery Store Gift Cards. Our East Region Manager organized a weekly check-in so we could all stay connected and support one another. I love working here, the love, support and kindness of the staff are amazing! A few weeks ago, I was gifted two sage plants from one of the families that has Sàgihidig Time here. She told me it was a gift to thank me for being so kind and caring and making the family feel welcome when they are here. My heart was so filled with love to hear that she feels welcome and cared for when she is here. Even though some days we deal with difficult situations, we always try to come at it from a place of love, kindness and respect. - Team Administrative Assistant

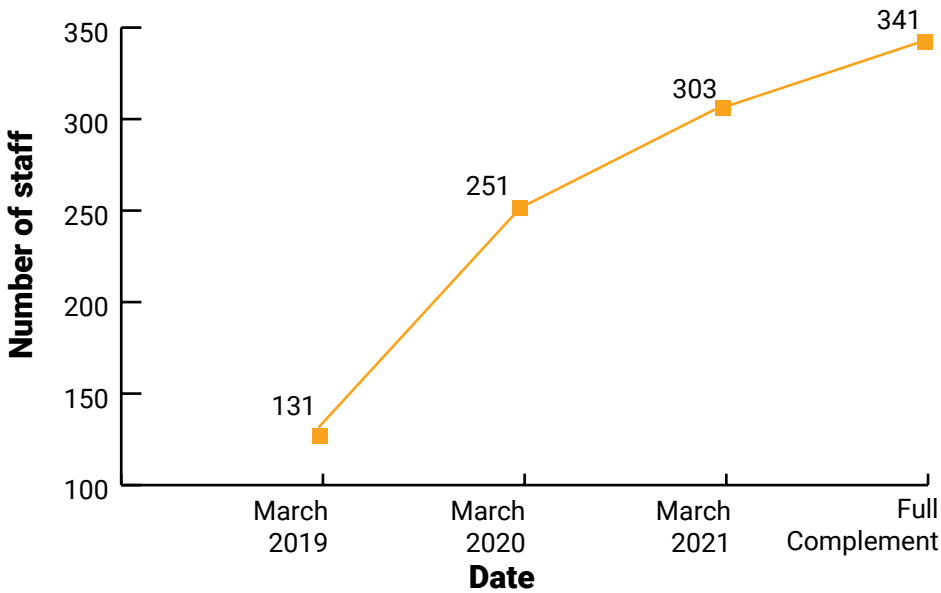
VOLUNTEERS

We successfully recruited 21 volunteer drivers over the course of the year.

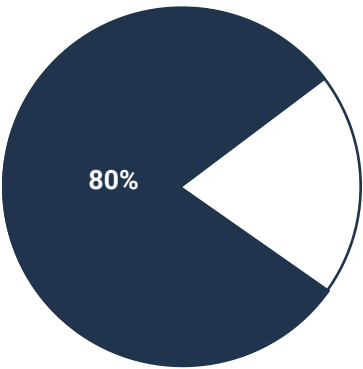
The implementation of a volunteer management system was delayed due to COVID. As a result, we coordinated 382 drives manually. Many thanks to our volunteers, including a number of staff, who supported the volunteer drive program to better serve children, youth and families.

If it wasn't for our volunteer drivers our families would not be as supported as they are. Volunteers are a very important part of what we do, thank you for helping, especially during these difficult times of covid. Chi-miigwetch! - Family Services Worker

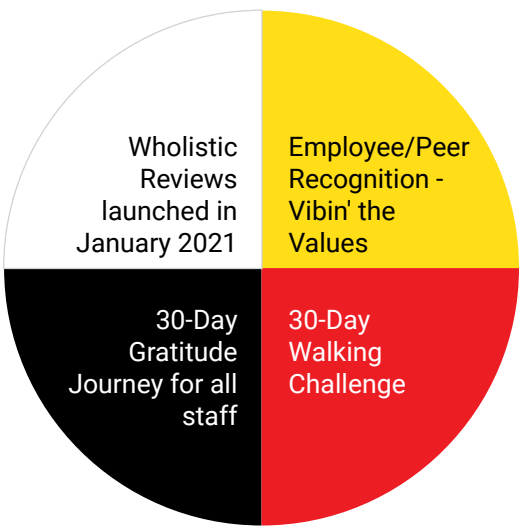
Staffing Annual Progression



% of Indigenous Staff



Employee Well-Being



INTERNAL SYSTEMS

CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION NETWORK

The Child Protection Information Network (CPIN) experienced its very first major upgrade in October 2020 and we are no longer the only Indigenous Agency using CPIN. We supported Niijaansinaanik prepare for the implementation of CPIN (along with other infrastructure support) ahead of their April 2021 Designation.

After OACAS announced the discontinuation of CPIN onboarding and training for child welfare staff, we had to develop an internal training program for our staff. We purchased Camtasia, a program that allowed us to create our own training materials and content.

DATA PROJECT

We were one of four pilot agencies selected to work with ANCFSAO and Convergence as part of the Indigenous Information System (IIS). We worked closely with Convergence to examine our case data and information management as part of Phase I of the IIS.

CASEWORKS

We worked on the implementation of Caseworks, a software that supports prevention and volunteer services. The pandemic caused delays; however, we were able to better prepare for the transition and implementation.

IT AND FINANCE

We migrated to a cloud-based file management system, SharePoint/OneDrive. This allowed for seamless, remote access to information - a

necessary endeavour due to the pandemic. We also added Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to all devices to mitigate against cyber threats posed by increased remote activity and logins.

We configured 74 Chromebooks, 60 tablets, and 32 laptops that were gifted to children, youth, and families to support connectivity.

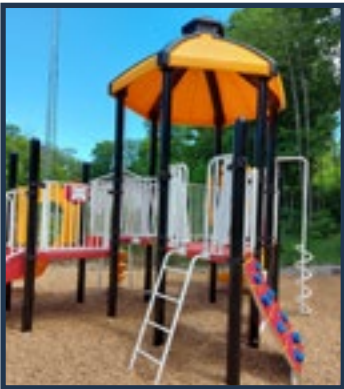
We implemented a new scheduling solution using SharePoint and Power Automate to better support Sàgihidig Family Time.

We put additional practices in place to allow for continuation of business throughout the pandemic. This included a bank deposit box, a payroll system that can be done remotely, and Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs).

FACILITIES

Over the course of the year, we opened a new office in Alderville First Nation, relocated an office space to the Beausoleil First Nation Event Centre, opened a new office in Tyendinaga, and procured a new building at Willett Road in Roslin.

We purchased playground equipment for 10 different locations – Rama, Barrie, Cedar Point, Beausoleil First Nation, Midland, Gravenhurst, Sutton, Hiawatha First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Tyendinaga, and Willett Rd.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of March 31, 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	5,576,776	5,306,853
Accounts Receivable	701,791	765,726
Prepaid expenses	84,423	136,828
	6,362,990	6,209,407
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS		
	4,015,956	1,517,266
	10,378,946	7,726,673
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	5,708,059	4,015,715
Due to Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	1,355,298	2,029,037
Deferred revenue	32,087	678,952
	7,095,444	6,723,704
DEFERRED CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS		
	3,865,956	1,517,266
	10,961,400	8,240,970
FUND BALANCES		
Unrestricted	(732,454)	(514,297)
Equity in tangible capital assets	150,000	
	(582,454)	(514,297)
	10,378,946	7,726,673

