



KITASKINAW EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
Education Division

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



## Message from the Executive Director

tansi maskêkosak,

This past year 2019-2020 has been a record year for Kitaskinaw Education Authority. Our departments - Early Learning (Day care, Head start, Pre-school), maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik (MK), Youth department and Student Services are dedicated to serving our children, youth and families. We did not expect a pandemic to take place this year but our resiliency as nehiyawak and the path of our ancestors has guided us to look within and understand what truly matters, and that is to take care of one another during this unprecedented time. Our caring actions are still each other's only protection.

We had many celebrations this year that we are proud of:

- The grand opening of our new school! This state-of-the-art facility won an award for best design.
- We introduced a land-based education program and integrated arts program that will deeply support our students learning modalities moving forward.
- We had more high-school graduates from our School than ever! There was a combined total of 27 on & off reserve graduates and,
- We congratulate 10 post-secondary graduates.

This exciting news puts good pressure on us to continue to do even better!

March 16th was a turning point for KEA when we had to close all Education departments due to COVID19 and to mitigate transmission onto the Nation. Without exception at MK school, our instructional staff worked together to create a learning contingency plan to provide an on-line instructional program focusing on:

1. Instructional time/lessons for students
2. Practice & application for students
3. Q & A period for students

Teachers checked-in with students on a weekly basis and this plan carried on until the end of June and the summer vacation.

With the recent announcements from Alberta Education, we have been planning diligently to provide an educational program that includes input from parents and school staff and meets health and safety protocols from Alberta Health Services, the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for the province, as well as all Nation requirements.

KEA has also hosted participative strategic planning sessions to develop long-term goals such as the establishment of an Early Learning Centre of Excellence, further supporting holistic youth activities on the Nation while increasingly integrating more maskêkosak language & culture into programming to benefit our students and families.

With the supportive leadership of our Division Leads, Councilors Nola Wanuch and John Thomas, we are continuing to transform education to recognize the strengths & gifts of our children and to develop those attributes by providing a learning & support services through a balanced approach. As we build the Nation's education system, everything we do is to become more effective in achieving stronger outcomes for our children and families down the road for seven generations.

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Darcella Kasokeo

Executive Director of Education

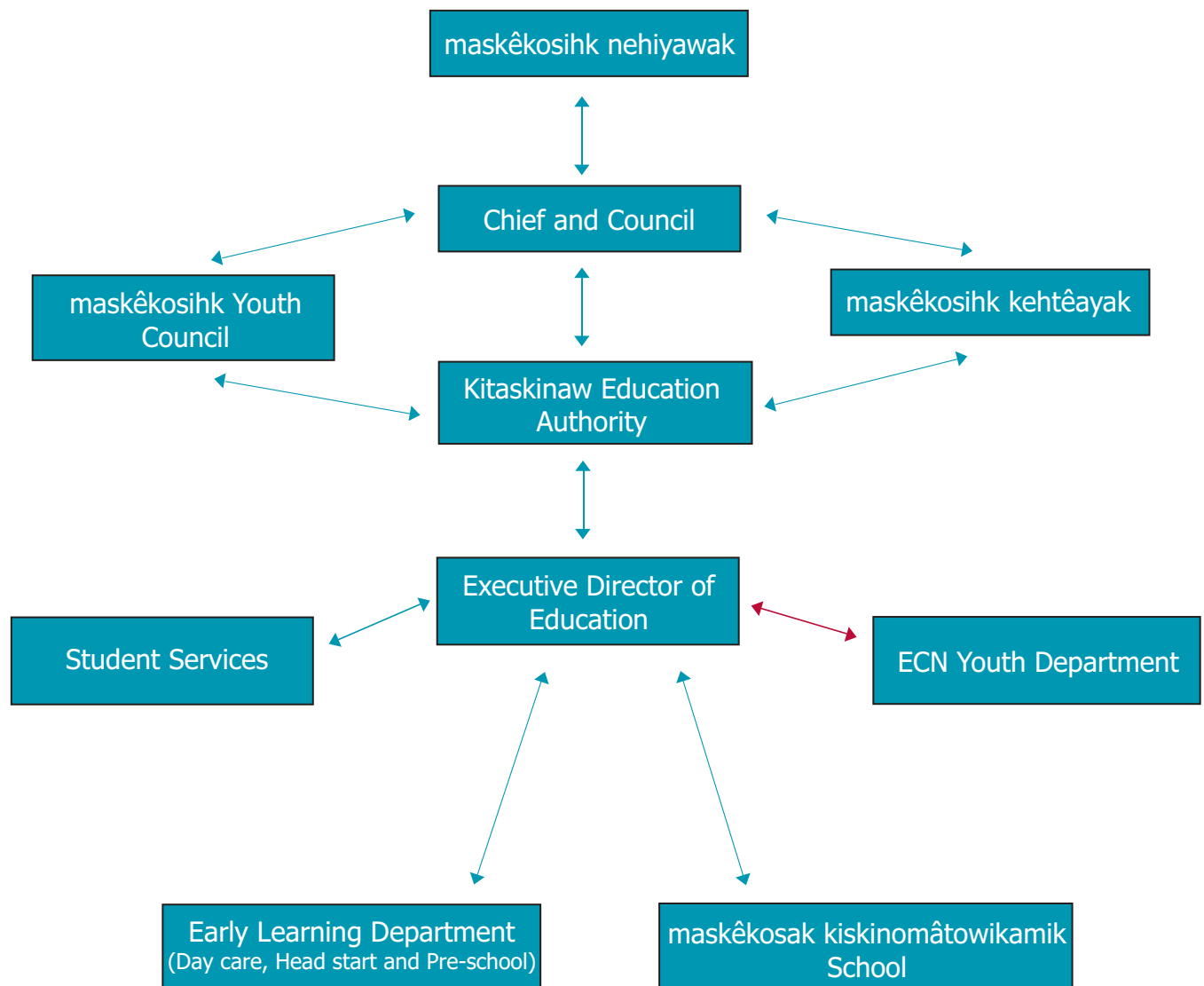


## KEA DEPARTMENTS

There are 4 departments in KEA. They are maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik School, Enoch Youth, Student Services and Early Learning. There are more than 150 staff in KEA providing services to all maskêkosihk youth at various times and regularly to 410+ students registered at maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik, 200 youth attending youth programs, 120+ early learners and more than 60 post-secondary students.



## Organizational Chart





## KITASKINAW EDUCATION AUTHORITY (KEA) GOVERNANCE

### Purpose

kâkakiy kâ-sîtoskâhcik awâsisak kinistowinahkik otawîhkôsôwiniwâw nehiyâwiwin kakaskihtamâsocik miyo mamitonêyicikan, otâcahkîwiniwâw, miyomahcihîwin, ekwa sohkâtisiwin ita kôcicik.

To guide and support each awasis (child, a lighted angelic being) to reach their full potential intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically, and to realize a strong maskêkosihk nehiyawak identity within a safe, respectful, and loving learning environment.

### Vision

To collectively nurture and support lifelong learners.

### Guiding Foundational Principles

KEA is guided by the maskêkosihk nehiyawak Foundational Principles as given by our maskêkosihk kehtêayak to provide a foundation for maskêkosihk nehiyawak.

- **kiskiyimsowim:** Understanding one's nehiyaw identity.
- **kiskinowaskiyimowin:** Valuing the wisdom of the kehtêayak and regularly seeking their counsel.
- **nehiyawitowin:** Reclaiming language as a foundational element of the maskêkosihk nehiyawak.
- **wahkotowin:** Acknowledging our interconnectedness with mother earth, our families, and the spirit world.

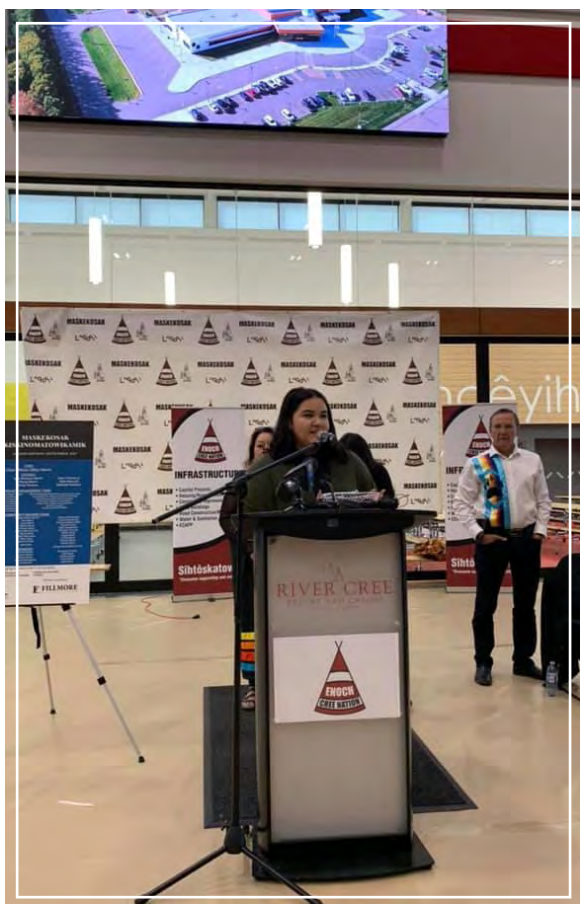
### KEA's nehiyaw pimâtisôwin goals

- Ongoing guidance and support from maskêkosihk kehtêayak.
- Reclaiming our maskêkosak heritage and principled ways of knowing.
- The creation of fluent nehiyaw language speakers.
- Continuous academic improvement and success for all students.
- Students who demonstrate a clear understanding of maskêkosihk nehiyawak Foundational Principles.
- A quality learning program that exceeds regional, provincial and national standards.
- The school as the heart of the community.
- Trust and respect of the whole community.



## MASKÊKOSAK KISKINOMÂTOWIKAMIK SCHOOL

Grand Opening September 26th 2019



## MASKÊKOSAK KISKINOMÂTOWIKAMIK SCHOOL

Grand Opening September 26th 2019

We are truly humbled by and appreciative of our beautiful and modern school. Our school is named as a place to learn about and live pimâtisôwin – the good life ways – of the people of the Land of Medicines, the maskêkosak, of maskêkosihk (Enoch). The name was given following protocol.

The new school marks a new beginning in Education at Enoch. We are working purposefully to merge maskêkosihk nehiyawewin (Enoch Cree) language and culture and other maskêkosak ways of learning about the world, with the best in Western educational approaches.





## maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik Commitment

Our kehtâyak, beloved Elders, educators and others recognize the priceless benefits of a balanced approach to learning. Therefore, at maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik we are committed to

"Nurturing **kisêtêhêwin** kind hearts, **mâmitonêcikêwin** inquiring minds, **sôhk acâhkwak** strong spirits and **kiskinohamawâkanak** life-long learners"

We are creating strategies to develop students' learning skills while integrating our nehiyaw perspectives into all areas of study. Our intention is to advance our community by fostering excitement for life-long learning. We will accomplish this through an integrated, balanced learning approach that will meet or exceed Alberta Education curriculum standards.

## maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik facts

- \$27.7 M project.
- Showcases archival photographs of our ancestors and community
- Indigenous design features
- Respect for land, culture and kinship
- Award winning design by Workun Garrick
- Built on time and on budget by Fillmore Contracting LTD.
- Funded by ISC, ECN and various grants
- Students registered — 420
- Staff — 110
- New Wildcats logo and Uniforms



## Wildcats Highlights

- Stellar team performances in cross-country, volleyball, floor hockey and basketball. Teams at their best in a great many ways.
- High School Volleyball Teams attended U of A Bears Volleyball Game
- Grant MacEwan Volleyball Teams came to maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik for an inter squad game
- Mentorship students took training for IYMP (Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program) training at Sylvan Lake
- Traditional Games student team taught Edmonton Catholic educators
- Junior/Senior high school reps attended Ever Active Schools' Resiliency Summit in Calgary
- Spirit North taught a cross-country ski program at maskêkosihk
- maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik hosted Treaty 6 Volleyball Treaties
- Hip Hop and Socafit dance were provided for our elementary students
- Rocks and Rings taught our elementary students how to curl
- 3 pep rallies, with the introduction of our very own mascot "kîskwayminôš"

## MASKÊKOSAK KISKINOMÂTOWIKAMIK FEATURED NEW PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES

### Land Based Learning

Land means different things to non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. For we maskêkosak, as with other Indigenous peoples, land holds a profound spiritual, physical, social and cultural connection. This land is our home, in every sense of the word. Since time immemorial our ancestors, the River Cree and Western Cree peoples, living in small bands, enjoyed wahkohtowin (kinship) with all natural elements including trees, plants, fish, birds, abundant game, migrating flocks and herds while trading along the North Saskatchewan River. The land was respected and cared for and in turn it shared abundantly with human kin. Plants provided plentiful remedies – some say more than 200 medicines were gathered and used. Land meant, and still means, animate and inanimate family members, culture, identity and self. The land, spirituality and natural law were intertwined and still are.

This past year was the first year of our holistic Land Based Learning program. It was a pilot program and it was a massive success. We are so thankful. The program is based on recommendations and evidence from multiple sources, first and foremost from our knowing kehtëâyak who led the way forward with the words “The Land Heals. Our Mother Earth is our Teacher.”

Everything is connected, so the integrated Land Based Learning team includes knowledge keepers, skilled guides, teachers and facilitators; Cree language teachers, culture teachers, counsellors, integrated arts musicians, artists and videographers as well as curriculum writers. The land is important to everything and involves all aspects of the curriculum.

Moving into the second year, expect to see more Land Based activities based on Honouring Land as Teacher, with students engaging in seasonal, multi-day, year-long, land-based experiences. Outdoor learning is easy to adapt to COVID-19 safety requirements. We will also be creating some super good outdoor learning spaces too.



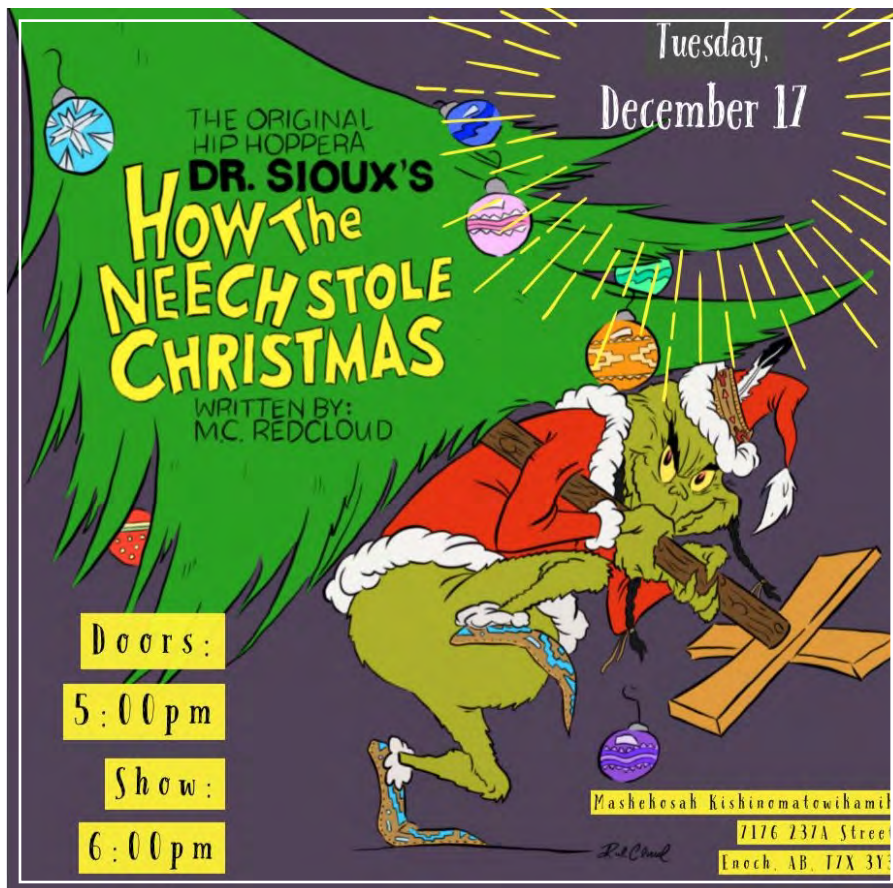
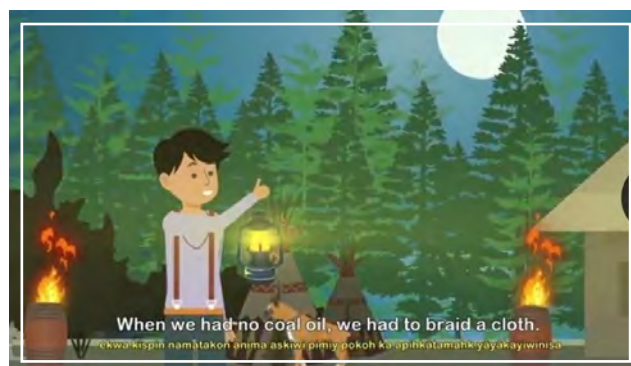


## Integrated Indigenous Arts Program

Recognizing the natural artistic talents and the strengths and interests of our people, we piloted our Integrated Indigenous Arts Program.

There are a wealth of untapped student abilities, so the Integrated Arts team focused on providing new opportunities for students to excel. Engaging with kehtêayak, advisors, maskêkosihk artists and volunteers, all arts experiences were designed to celebrate Indigenousness. Output was prolific and a treat for everyone with projects including:

- How the Neech Stole Christmas – an Indigenous hip hoppera
- Cree Choir – translating songs into Cree, singing and sharing with others including Elders Program, younger students and visitors to our school
- Indigenous Angela Radio – Every song is centred on native youth and is radio friendly. The intention is to teach the students how to run the station, engineer, record shows, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), station breakers, community commercials, ECN and other Indigenous Group promotions and share their musical and creative talents. The radio station already has 4,000 listeners!
- Bear Grease – Our take on Indigenizing the classic Grease!
- Indigenous Animations – animating Elders' stories about Life at Enoch and providing subtitles in Cree. There will be 24 videos ready for release soon!



## Covid-19 School Programming and Student Supports

Effective March 16<sup>th</sup>, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to cancel all classes. Although in-school instruction was paused, maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik staff continued to offer learning opportunities and counselling supports for our students.

In saying this, staff created a school wide Facebook Group where caregivers could find general information and updates pertaining to maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik as well as links to grade specific Facebook Groups. Each grade specific group provided instructional learning opportunities and materials. Also available were:

- Laptops
- Learning packages, grade and teacher specific
- Group online classes including fitness, drawing and art
- Indigenous Angels Radio – with Public Service Announcements and encouraging messages
- Youth mental health supports and crisis line, on line and phone
- Indigenous Legends – colouring book for all ages and grades
- Moosebumpz – on line high school level stories and follow up activities
- Quarantine Choir – on-line instruction through different songs, singing games and vocal exercise with culture and language involvement
- School Parade – to reconnect with the entire school community. We sure missed the students and families.





## School Relaunch September 2020



Our priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. Kitaskinaw Education Authority (KEA) has developed a comprehensive re-entry plan. The plan is reflective of a return to school hybrid model. This means classes will partially resume with additional health measures in place to provide caregivers with confidence in the education opportunities at maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik.

## STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

In 2019-20 there were almost 200 applications for K-12 student support, which includes both on and off-reserve students. Students attended a total of 25 different elementary schools, 18 junior high schools, and 20 high schools.

### Graduates

We congratulate all 27 high school graduates. It was a privilege to be able to host an outdoor graduation event which we will never forget and we hope you will remember forever. Honouring ceremonies were held under beautiful sunny skies, at maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik, on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### We congratulate and recognize our Nation's ten post-secondary graduates for 2019/20

**Chenoa Cardinal**, Bachelor of Science (U of A)

**Justice Cardinal**, Licensed Practical Nurse (Norquest)

**Tyrell Dodd**, Bachelor of Commerce with Distinction (Seneca College)

**Cassandra Hutcheon**, Bachelor of Arts (U of A)

**Casey Letendre**, Bachelor of Arts (MacEwan University)

**Nathan Morin**, Audio Engineering/Studio Production Diploma (Nimbus Recording School)

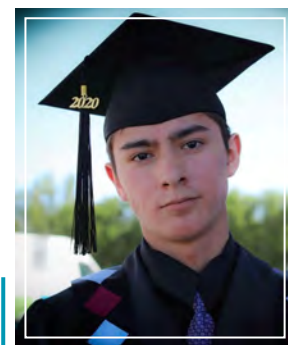
**Cheryl Ogima**, Bachelor of Commerce with Distinction (Lakehead University)

**Tyree Papin**, Social Work Diploma (MacEwan University)

**Tyler Thomas**, Bachelor of Arts (U of A), Indigenous Governance & Partnership Certificate

**Crystal Courtepatte**, Bachelor of Commerce with Distinction (MacEwan University) and,

**Dr. Jesse Spooner** completed requirements to become our Nation's first medical doctor (M.D.).





## Post Secondary Student Support

For 2020/21 there will be fifty continuing students and eleven new funded students attending post-secondary schools. Good luck everyone. Keep a balance in your work, rest and play. We are only a phone call or an email away if you need support and encouragement.

## EARLY YEARS-DAYCARE, HEAD START AND PLAYSCHOOL

### Children and Families

The children were engaged in Daycare, Head Start and Playschool from September-March 2020. In mid-March, due to Covid – 19, all programs were closed and the children were asked to stay at home safely with their families/guardians. Until March, while the children were in our care, there were observations made regarding how to support the awasisak - gifted lighted beings - in an enriched program that would integrate culture, language, opikinâwasowin (traditional child raising) and maximize all opportunities for child development.

New families were offered Ages and Stages checklists for their children and these assessments were ongoing to support future curriculum development and planning. Some of the children were being supported by integrated student services providers such as an occupational therapist and speech language pathologist. These team members provide activities to assist the children in their full development.

### More Natural Interior Design and Holistic Learning

To create a more holistic and natural experience, we were in the process of refurnishing Daycare and Head Start with more natural materials and adding in elements such as wood, water and rocks.

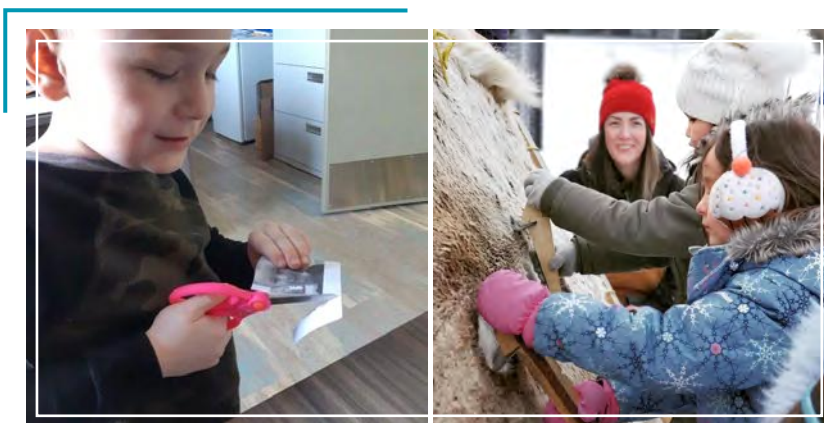
At the centres the children were hearing Cree and receiving Cree lessons. They had opportunities to sing, dance and celebrate culture. Everyone was learning the words of the week and month together by acting out the word or phrase. This is called total physical response (TPR) learning. It is fun!

### Online Connection

During Covid-19, online through the Facebook groups, we connected the literacy coordinator, speech pathologist and occupational therapist from maskêkosak kiskinomâtowikamik to the children and families.

The kindergarten children maintained a connection with their teachers via Facebook and videos. We offered the families a workshop in February; there were 8 participants.

A new kindergarten registration form was created and distributed to the families for the upcoming school year 2020-2021. An exciting video was created by the kindergarten teachers to showcase the program which includes Land Based Learning opportunities.

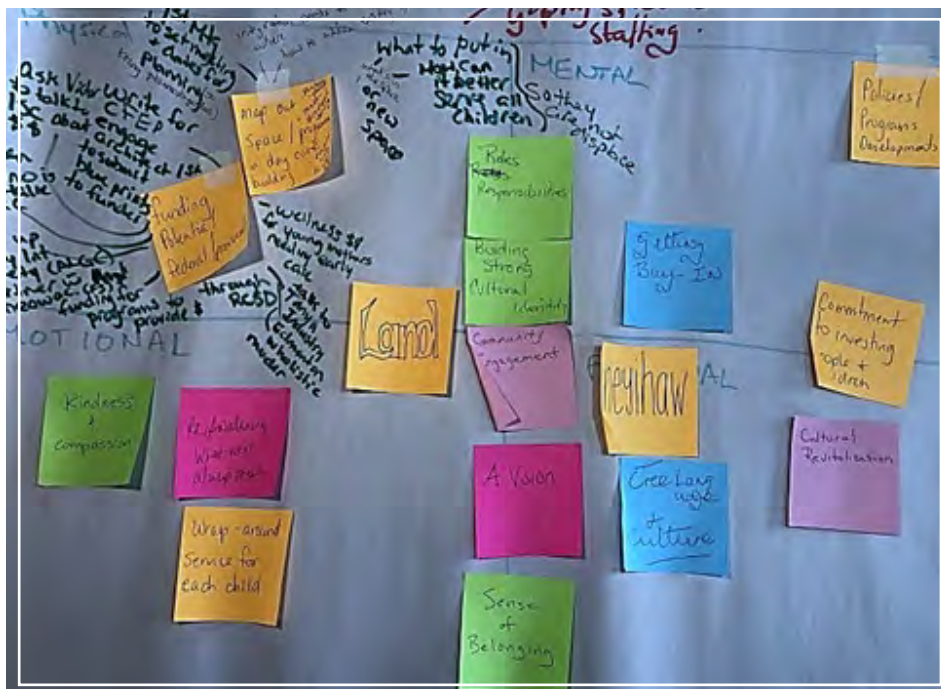


Daycare and Head Start staff attended the Early Years Conference in Vancouver at the end of January and were invited to share feedback about their experiences through an evaluation tool. Playschool and Kindergarten staff attended the Think Indigenous conference for educators.

## Early Years Centre of Excellence

For the last few years KEA has been working towards Enoch's very own Early Learning Centre – a place where maskêkosak values are housed and the foundation for learning is rooted in community history and cultural identity. We are thankful for the advisement and resourcing from departments in nehiyaw pimâtisôwin and mamôwacitowin. Therefore, this spring, we participated in several inter-departmental collaborative planning sessions including visioning for the Early Years Centre of Excellence. Participants spent three days together, both in socially-distanced in person meetings as well as with online participation. With many interactive activities, we planned for the future by identifying gaps, resources and thinking through next steps. Guiding questions included: What work is needed to implement positive innovative work in your area? What are your gifts and how can you move this work forward? What professional/personal support do you need to do this work? And, in what ways can you bring maskêkosak values, history, culture and ways of learning to life in your work? In follow up work sessions, the team developed a detailed Implementation Plan to ensure the Early Years Centre of Excellence moves forward to become reality.

Relaunch plans are ready and are being updated as new information becomes available and regulations are required. Our greatest concern is the health and well-being of the children and staff. Once relaunch is announced new routines and arrangements will be implemented.



## ENOCH YOUTH DEPARTMENT (EYD)

### Mission

The Enoch Youth Department (EYD) is committed to providing healthy alternatives and positive lifestyle choices for our youth to continue to build strong, healthy and proud individuals. By engaging the community, we ensure that the EYD's activities meet the growing and diverse needs of our community, now and in the future.

### COVID-19 Response – Virtual Activities and Challenges

The Enoch Youth Department has been affected by COVID-19 financially, physically and emotionally for all of our kids, parents and staff. Therefore, in response to COVID-19, we have changed our approach to reach the youth of our community through virtual programming, being creative and thinking outside the box. As a result of our new approach, we have implemented new on-line programs including our “Activity Challenge”, which include the Tik Tok Challenge, Community Clean-Up Challenge, Creativity Challenge and Physical Activity Challenge. We have also implemented an on-line fitness program developed by Zone 105 fitness for our youth. The program provides video instructions of the age appropriate workouts for indoor and outdoor sessions, without the use of weights and is easily accessible to all our youth.

Our on-line programming has reached over 200 youth in a short period of time. As we move forward and create new ways to reach youth, we know we have only just scratched the surface of possibilities with on-line programming. We now realise we have the capabilities to branch out to offer a wide range of options catering to a variety of interests.

### Adapting In-Person Programming to New Health and Safety Guidelines

As the Alberta Health Services guidelines are adjusting with each phase, EYD is adapting to the changes and have hosted a successful and free Skateboard workshop with Nations Skate Youth at our skate park. The workshop followed all the safety guidelines set by AHS and Enoch's OHS department and was very successful.





## Fall 2020 Plans

Currently we are in the process of planning a Leadership and Wellness hockey camp for all age categories in September. It will also follow all safety guidelines set in place by AHS and OHS.

The camp will have an on-ice portion ran by a professional hockey player/coach, dry-land training, leadership and wellness class, nutrition education, drug and alcohol awareness, a financial literacy component, as well as an Elder who will speak to the athletes.

The Enoch Youth Department is following the AHS guidelines closely and plan on using the template of the Skateboard workshop and the Hockey camp for future programs.

Following Divisional Strategic Planning Sessions, we realise that there is immense potential for collaboration across the KEA Division and inter departmentally. Identifying ways to access more facilities for a different range of activities and programming, we will continue to plan for more youth interests.

EYD's intention is to adapt to changes while endeavouring to meet the diverse needs of our youth.

## Grants

The Enoch Youth Department has a partnership with OM Hockey Systems and True North Aid for the upcoming 2020/21 hockey season if/when it starts. OM Hockey System will provide cutting edge hockey training for our players throughout the season.

"OM Hockey Systems is a revolutionary hockey training program that is substantially ahead of the current cutting edge of professional hockey skill development. Using uniquely designed obstacles instead of traditional training methods, OM produces functional hockey skill at an exponential rate never before seen in the game of hockey. It truly represents a paradigm shift in the way athletes are trained on the ice."

The program is for all Enoch band and community members and while the cost is estimated to be \$75,000.00 - \$100,000.00, because of our grant, it will be free of charge.

The Enoch Youth Department has also secured grant funds for the Leadership and Wellness hockey camp in September for our band member youth. The camp is funded through a combination of grants and will involve other departments including the school and Health Centre.

We are actively searching for new grants, government funding and finding new and innovative ways to provide programs for our youth and off-set costs to our current budget.

## Planning and Partnerships

The Enoch Youth Department is following AHS and ECN guidelines closely. We have been planning for the upcoming hockey season, creating scenarios for potential programs at the youth centre, while developing partnerships within the Nation's various departments, First Nations Skate, True North, OM Hockey systems and the River Cree Twin Rinks. We are actively pursuing additional partnerships and funding to enhance our programs and offset our budget during these challenging times.