



## Word from the President

At the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre, the year 2016-2017 has passed extraordinarily fast. Last year's important announcements by the government have allowed for the implementation of major projects such as Kinawit et Kijaté. The opening of Willie's Place day drop-in centre was followed by that of Nigan, a service centre for women. The renovation of the main lodge of the Kinawit cultural and touristic site was completed while a call for tenders for the construction of the Kijaté social housing was solicited. A regional company was granted the contract and we are proud to announce that this project will not only provide adequate housing to 24 Aboriginal families, but its construction will significantly contribute to the economy of our town and region.

This year of outstanding growth did not go without a number of challenges. It was an opportunity for the management team and the Board of Directors to develop capacity-building tools and revisit our governance methods. This work is well underway, notably with the addition of seats to the Board of Directors, which went from 7 to 9 members in order to ensure a representation for the residents of the Kijaté housing units.

Needless to say that this growth for the benefit of the urban Aboriginal community's wellness required much adaptation from our staff and a lot of dedication to their work. As President, I wish to thank the big family of the Friendship Centre's team: the hard working Board members; the staff members and the management. I ask them to stay the course as another important year is beginning with the ongoing development projects.

The past year was also marked by the announcement of the Inquiry Commission "Listening, Reconciliation and Progress" by the Quebec government, which carries the hope of renewed relationships between Aboriginal people and public services. In that spirit, many partners have mobilised and we can feel the emergence of a true desire for reconciliation.

Among these initiatives, let us mention the two meetings of Mayors and Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement, held respectively in La Tuque last October and Val-d'Or last March. Let us hope that, like the flocks of birds coming back in the spring and whose songs make us reflect on reconciliation with ourselves and with others, these gatherings carry the hope of a better future.

*Oscar Kistabish*  
Oscar Kistabish  
PRESIDENT



## MISSION

The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre is a hub of urban services, a living environment and a cultural anchor for the First Peoples, dedicated to the well-being, justice and social inclusion, it promotes harmonious coexistence in the community.

## VISION

Leader of a committed indigenous civil society, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre actively contributes to the social, community, economic and cultural development of the community through innovative and proactive strategies.

## VALUES

At the Friendship Centre, programming and service provision is based on human values of commitment, respect, integrity, solidarity.

## A dedicated team!

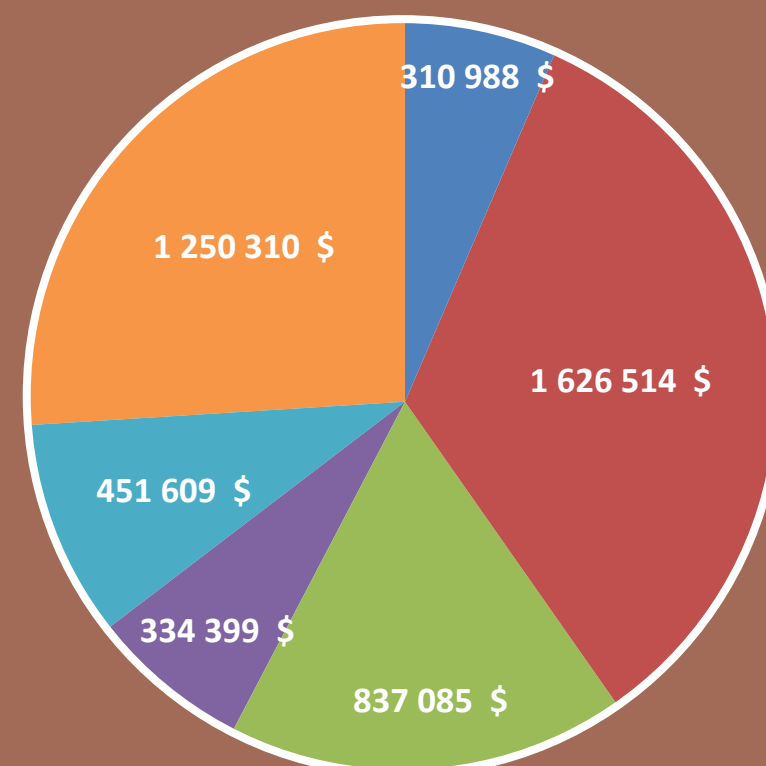
89 employees at the Friendship Centre as of March 31, 2017  
46 Aboriginal employees  
52% of Aboriginal employees

### Training:

Teachings and making of medicine pouches with all the employees.  
Two training sessions on cultural safety are offered to the employees.



## Distribution of revenues 2016-2017



- Support to the mission - federal, provincial and Cree gov. Grants
- Programs and services - federal grants
- Programs and services - provincial grants
- Programs and services - Other grants
- Service contracts
- Own-source revenues

## Family Christmas



## Mēmēgwashi Gala

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## Word from the Director General

Kwe, wachiya,

For over four decades, Val-d'Or's urban indigenism has manifested itself through our Friendship Centre's collective action. This collective action puts forward an urban Aboriginal society project embodied in a citizen's vision of wellness, justice and social inclusion of Aboriginal people. By staying focused on this vision, the Friendship Centre pursues its mission that consists in being an urban service hub, a living environment, an identity and cultural anchorage for First Peoples, while fostering peaceful coexistence between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

The year 2016-2017 saw a large number of accomplishments and promising initiatives for the community. The implementation of large scale structuring projects by the Friendship Centre, such as social housing and cultural tourism, demonstrates the agency and innovative social insights of the Val-d'Or Aboriginal community. The innovative solutions designed by the Friendship Centre to improve the quality of life and reduce inequalities and injustices provide culturally safe and relevant answers for the community.

Cultural safety is now one of the strategies for action and intervention prioritised by the Friendship Centre. It is a transformative and reconciliation process that has been proven and implemented many years ago in Aboriginal communities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Researcher and anthropologist Carole Lévesque gives the following definition: "The cultural safety process is aimed at a true social transformation by proposing to reconsider the public policies regarding Aboriginal populations and to renew practices from a decolonisation and self-determination perspective." At the local scale, the Friendship Centre adopted the cultural safety approach (1) to build trust between Aboriginal people, on one hand, and decision-makers, employees and professionals working in public services, on the other hand; (2) to create safe and welcoming environments in terms of culture and identity for the Aboriginal population within the public sector (health, social services, education, public security, justice...); (3) to offer living environments free of racism and prejudice, based on trust, empathy, dignity and respect.

Ultimately, for the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre, the cultural safety approach, combined with its social innovation and sustainable development processes, allows progressing positively towards social, community, cultural and political recognition of Aboriginal people. In the wake of an Aboriginal modernity active across Canada, our Friendship Centre clearly embodies the emancipation from a colonial past and the liberation of our heritage to make way for a renewed Aboriginal society project.

*Edith Cloutier*  
Edith Cloutier  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



GRAPHIC DESIGN: PEGGY TRUDEL  
PHOTOS: PAUL BRINDAMOUR AND VAL-D'OR NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE



## Anicinabemotan - Let's speak Anicinabe

Through Anicinabe language courses, the Elders showed their pride and reconnected with the heart of their identity. They renewed and acquired knowledge to keep their culture alive and pass on these teachings to other community members.





## A place of healing - A place of reconciliation

### Standing together on the path of reconciliation

#### #SolidarityIkwe

In November, **200 Aboriginal** and non-Aboriginal people gather in front of the courthouse in reaction to the decision of the Director of criminal and penal prosecution (DPCP) not to lay charges against police officers from Val-d'Or denounced by Aboriginal women.



Testimonials and **messages of solidarity** continue to pour in: people from all over Quebec show their support to Aboriginal women.



The **Sisters in Spirit Vigil** to honour murdered and missing Indigenous women brought together about 100 persons.

The Quebec government announces the creation of the Inquiry **Commission "Listening, Reconciliation and Progress"**, which will look into the relations between Aboriginal people and different public institutions. This announcement generated much hope!

In order to improve and facilitate service complementarity in health, social services, education, employability, public security and justice, a **local committee on service access for Aboriginal people** was created in Val-d'Or, under the co-chairmanship of the CISSS-Abitibi-Témiscamingue and our Friendship Centre. The Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec and the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat coordinate a central committee for Quebec.

### Noteworthy partnerships:

Our members joyfully participate in the animation of an allegorical float representing the Friendship Centre and the Aboriginal community on the occasion of the popular **Santa Claus Parade** organised by the Regroupement des gens d'affaires du centre-ville de Val-d'Or.



Women attend arts and **crafts workshops** during which themes related to sexual violence are addressed, in collaboration with Assaut sexual secours.



Elders and youth grow a vegetable plot at the **Val-d'Or community garden**.

Young people who regularly use the Friendship Centre's premises are hosted by L'Énergik et the Municipal Library while the **Centre's community hall is being renovated**.

**Tasting of traditional food** cooked by the Elders for the **Cégep en spectacle** gives rise to exceptional discussions and cultural sharing.

### Our must-attend events: major bridge-building initiatives!

#### Mëmëgwashi GALA

**194 students** honoured at the Gala and 12 role models of perseverance featured in the 2017 "Catch Your Dreams" calendar, including two Elders. The honourable mention is granted to Shayn Larivière who obtained his private pilot license at the age of 16!



#### National Aboriginal Day

**IKWE – A Tribute to Love** features a variety of women singers before **2000 spectators**.



#### 17<sup>th</sup> Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- Our spokeswoman 2017, Béatrice Vaugrante, Director General for Amnesty International – French Canada at the **Gabriel-Commanda Walk** attended by nearly **1000 people**!



- In collaboration with DIALOG Network, a day of reflection and discussion at UQAT on the issue of systemic racism attended by **115 people**.



- The Town of Val-d'Or hosting the second **Meeting of Mayors and Quebec Native Friendship Centres Movement**. The representatives of 9 cities and Friendship Centres signed a "Mutual commitment to improve urban Aboriginal people's living conditions" and created a joint committee.

- The Week ended with the publication of the **Gabriel-Commanda Educational Kit**, a cultural awareness tool intended for schools, from kindergarten to secondary 5, available online.

### Medical Transportation Service

The team responded to **2 600** requests for medical transportation.

## Community Development Sector

The Community Development sector contributes to the Aboriginal community's active participation and involvement in the social, community, political and economic life by recognising its member's potential, assisting them in strengthening their capacities and asserting their cultural identity.

### Community Services

The Community Services aim to involve Aboriginal community members in a citizen and solidarity initiative allowing them to be the main actors in the development of their collectivity.

The regular activities of the Community Services have reached **448 different persons in 2016-2017. 63% are women and 37% are men.**

#### Persons reached by our Youth Services

**Primary level homework support: 47 children**

**Secondary level homework support: 31 youth**

**Mohiganesh Club "Little Wolves": 50 children and 32 families**

**Summer Day Camp: 47 children**

**Youth Centre (13 to 18 year-olds): 68 youth**



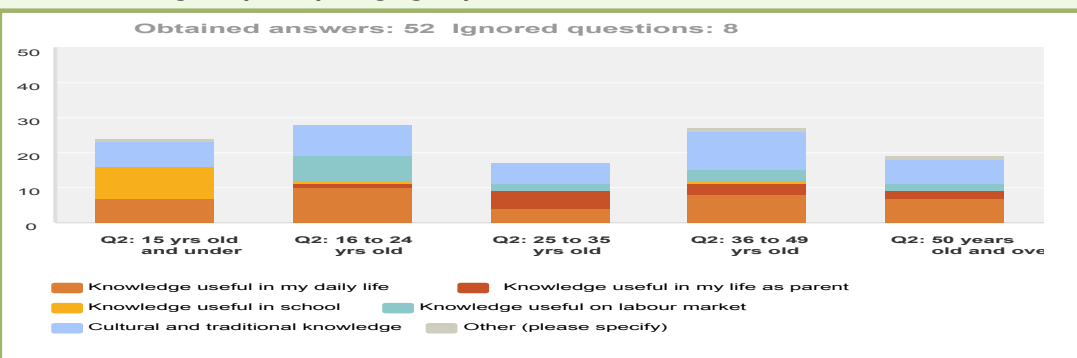
The activities include cultural or spiritual, educational, recreational, sports and health/food related activities. More specifically, they are homework support, teachings by Elders or cultural trainers, games, collective cooking, medicine plants and much more.

#### An evaluation conducted with 62 persons shows that:

**43%** of respondents **participated** at least once per week in the Friendship Centre's activities.

**91%** of respondents said the Friendship Centre's activities allowed them acquiring **new knowledge**.

#### Main knowledge acquired per age group:



The new knowledge acquired by all generations is mostly cultural and traditional knowledge as well as knowledge useful in their daily life.

79% of participants considered that the Friendship Centre's activities have encouraged them to **get involved in their community**.

People using the Friendship Centre's Community Services were able to access more support, activities and knowledge on healthy lifestyles and sexuality, drug, tobacco and violence prevention. They were able to develop their academic, parental and employability skills, their motivation and involvement.



### Skills Development Services

The Skills Development Services seek to reduce the obstacles to Aboriginal involvement in the socioeconomic life through skills development increasing employability, the promotion of Aboriginal workforce and the development of partnerships.

The **Tciman training** path allowed **15 participants** to develop essential and vocational skills to improve access to non specialised trades.

The **Madjimākwīn training** allowed **27 participants** to develop their life skills to help them elaborate an action plan or a life project.

### Justice Access Services

The Justice Access Services aim to involve Aboriginal community members in the full exercise of their rights by promoting the acquisition of skills and knowledge facilitating the understanding of the legal system, laws and regulations as well as legal recourse.

**30 persons** benefited from specific individual assistance from our Justice Access service.

**11 persons** attended workshops on rights and recourses.

Preparation for the implementation of **Wanaki**, a **community mediation service** aimed to provide assistance to landlords and Aboriginal tenants in resolving conflicts that may occur in their relationships.



## Social Development Sector

The Social Development Sector contributes to the development and well-being of the Aboriginal community members by offering psycho-educational, psycho-social and health services that help create a balance in the soul, body, mind and heart, while encouraging the recognition and the development of skills, abilities and competencies. .

### Psychosocial Intervention Services

The Psychosocial Intervention Services aim to improve the individual's wellness by offering a culturally relevant and safe support which enables the person to improve his/her quality of life, to strengthen his/her interpersonal relationships and to live in harmony with his/her environment.

**13,751 interventions** were made with

**657 community members**, including

**381 women (58 %)** and **276 men (42 %)**.

Intervention Services Reception: **1482 meetings**

were held with **287 different persons**.

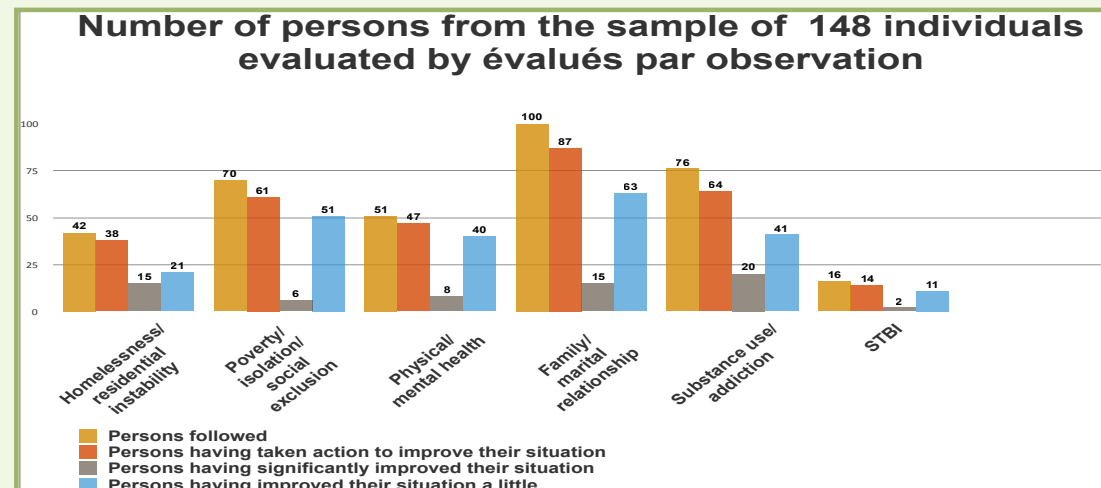
Fight against homelessness and residential instability:

**193 interventions** with 70 persons looking for housing, **42 interventions** with 27 persons for placement in housing unit and **641 interventions** with 107 persons for maintenance in housing units.

Health support measures for residential school survivors: **77 interventions** with 25 different persons.



An evaluation conducted with **148 users of the Psychosocial Intervention Services** produced the following results:



### Willie's Place/Nigan day respite centre

16,036 attendances at Willie's Place/Nigan respite centre, 714 different persons.



### Early Childhood and Family Services

The Early Childhood and Family Services aim to support the development of the full potential of the child and family through the appropriation of new knowledge and the transmission of knowledge, allowing the child to evolve in a culturally appropriate and safe community environment.

#### Support to Aboriginal women

Individual and group support is still offered to the women who exposed police abuse and to their close ones as well. Four healing retreats, attended by 15 women, were held to assist them on their healing path.

**136 children** and their families served,

including **121** in Val-d'Or and **15** in Senneterre.

**Social perinatalty** provides support to expectant women and parents during the child's first years by providing assistance and approaches carefully adapted to each family's specific needs: prenatal courses, assistance for breastfeeding, postnatal activities, family organisation and home support.

**154 parents** of children aged 0 to 5 received assistance in the past year, including 101 mothers (66% of parents) and 53 fathers (34% of parents).

### Health Services

The Health Services aim to engage the Aboriginal community members as the primary actors in their global health improvement.

**Minowé 2.0**, in partnership with the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (CISSSAT), aims to increase Aboriginal access to the health and social services system through lasting changes in the practitioners' approaches and methods in order to include cultural relevancy and safety. Protocols for the development of renewed and enhanced partnerships between the two institutions are being elaborated. **Nursing services** are back as part of the Minowé 2.0 initiative.

**DIALOG Network**, a network of research and knowledge relating to Aboriginal people, maintains scientific intelligence on knowledge deriving from social and institutional changes put into practice through this comprehensive initiative.

## Social Economy Sector

The Aboriginal Social Economy Sector contributes to the democratic, long-lasting and supportive participation of the community as well as its social, cultural and economic vitality through the production of goods and services, access to quality jobs, recognition of Aboriginal workforce and economic diversification.

For the Social Economy sector, 2016-2017 was a year marked by the offer of relevant services meeting First Peoples' needs and supporting the activities of the Friendship Centre and its partners.

**Our objective** is to foster relations with others, cultural experience and discovery through lodging and food services in which we invested over \$ 200,000 to enhance our clientele's comfort and increase our business organisational capacity.

Kinawit's rental and catering services have accommodated our first groups for various events. Customised services and courteous reception characterise the experience offered to our clientele.



- **Services available 7 days a week**
- **Own-source revenues of \$ 1,078,268**
- **Total payroll of over \$ 630,000**
- **25 quality jobs**
- **76% of Aboriginal employees**
- **Practicum and training environment**



RECEPTION AND LODGING	FOOD SERVICES	ARTS AND CRAFTS SALES OUTLET	ROOM RENTAL
24 rooms that can accommodate up to 52 guests	<b>35,259</b> meals served by the cafeteria	A attraction for visitors	Through the Kinawit cultural site, the Friendship Centre offers meeting room rental to groups and organisations.
<b>3553</b> clients	<b>17,080</b> meals served to the Abinodjic Miguam Day Care Centre	Supporting artisans and promotion of their creations	
<b>12,248</b> bed-nights	<b>36,813</b> snacks served		
<b>67%</b> occupancy rate			

### Aboriginal Tourism

The collective initiative in Aboriginal tourism aims to support a sense of awareness, preservation and valorisation of cultural identity through a unique and genuine tourism experience of the First People's traditional and contemporary knowledge promoting encounter, sharing, transmission of intergenerational knowledge and cultural expression.

#### Kinawit Cultural Site

The Friendship Centre continued to devote every effort for the implementation of the Kinawit development plan. Major renovation and site development work was completed, including the main lodge and cabins. This project required an investment of over \$ 1,1 M, which was made possible thanks to our many partners.



This infrastructure allows the urban Aboriginal community members to fully experience their culture in a natural and inspiring environment. With the introduction of tourism activities, Kinawit will provide new quality jobs to Aboriginal people, while valuing traditional knowledge and fostering encounters, sharing, expression and intergenerational knowledge transmission.



### Community Housing

The Community Housing initiative's objective is to provide access to affordable, adequate and long-term housing to Aboriginal community members, as well as services promoting a positive and constructive life environment.

#### Kijaté "In full sun"

The Kijaté construction project for 24 social housing units for Aboriginal families received the final approval from the Société d'habitation du Québec. The construction began in January 2017.