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VAL-D'OR NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
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Photos:



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



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A Word from the Executive Director

More than ever, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre forms part of a new, Canada-wide Aboriginal modernity. This Aboriginal modernity is particularly characterised by the emergence of a leadership that moves on new paths of cultural reappropriation, assertion of rights and reconciliation of peoples. Aboriginal modernity develops around contemporary leaders who make the deliberate and informed choice of coping with the impacts of colonisation, yet without ignoring the loss of identity and territorial,

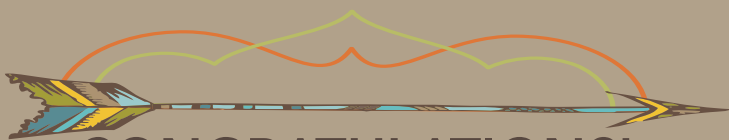
cultural and political alienation common to all Aboriginal people in the country. The purpose is to set our people free from a colonial past and its legacy of oppression in order to make way for a renewed Aboriginal society, inspired by both community-based values passed on from generation to generation since time immemorial, and by a vision of progress firmly anchored in the principles of autonomy and self-determination.

Today, our Friendship Centre is an essential actor in modernity and an agent of global change. Acting as a catalyst of change, the Centre is proposing a vision of inclusion rather than one of fighting exclusion, a sharing of land and resources rather than fighting against development. Such attitude reflects Aboriginal agency, which translates into First Peoples' capacity to act upon their own destiny while involving non-Aboriginals in their initiatives, purposes and intents. After forty years of Aboriginal community-building in the heart of the city, it is fair to say that the Val-d'Or Friendship Centre is indeed master of its own destiny!

At the Centre, Aboriginal modernity also manifests itself through our Aboriginal youth who seek to reconcile a past marked by marginalisation with the vision of a future based on hope and dreams. They are increasingly attending college and university, relearning their language and traditions and advocating for the recognition of Aboriginal rights. It is therefore not surprising to see these young people speak out, intervene publicly and claim their specificity within mainstream society. This new generation of leaders will be the driving force of tomorrow's Aboriginal societies.

It is important to recognise that Aboriginal modernity is emerging and that its parameters outline an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relationship that is hopefully equitable and mutually beneficial. The Québec society must make an effort to understand the context in which Aboriginal citizens evolve and act; it must take the measure of this new modernity, despite the complexity of the issues and challenges facing Aboriginal people on a daily basis. As for us, First People members, we have the responsibility to keep extending a hand of friendship to others, which is what our Friendship Centre has been doing for more than 40 years.

Edith Cloutier
Executive Director



CONGRATULATIONS!

**National Award of
Excellence 2014**
by the National Association
of Friendship Centres
of Canada.



The Centre was
awarded the
Prix Jeanne Lalancette-Bigué
by Val-d'Or's Cultural
Development Commission.





Word from the President

In 2014-2015, we celebrated our Friendship Centre's 40th anniversary. The past year was one of festive gatherings, but also of opportunities to demonstrate our solidarity with each and every member of our urban Aboriginal community.

As our hunter-gatherer ancestors used to do, we extended a helping hand to the most needy of our brothers and sisters. Indeed, hunters traditionally shared the game they harvested with their community members who stayed at the camp, those who were not able to hunt for their own sustenance. In so doing, our ancestors simply demonstrated their humanity and recognised the role and importance of each and everyone. No one was left behind, and the community was able to survive. This spirit still guides our actions. For example, last September we joined the Sisters in Spirit Vigil and walked to honour our murdered and missing sisters. In December, along with our partners, we inaugurated a day drop-in and respite centre for homeless people, which proved to be an extraordinary human experience. Beyond the results obtained and the hope it kindled, this encounter was a great mutual enrichment. In their daily work, the Friendship Centre's team and the community members using the Centre demonstrate the same values that guided our ancestors, these values that make us stronger and make our lives meaningful: commitment, respect, integrity and solidarity.

I wish to thank the Friendship Centre's great team whose work allows us to proudly present the past year's report, and to do it with a true feeling of accomplishment, a feeling that we contributed to the well-being of our brothers and sisters and to educating the public on our many realities as urban Aboriginal people. Thanks also to our partners who journey along with us in many broad-scope projects that carry the great collective dream of a more just and secure society. We hope we can count on you as we pursue this dream.

Kitci Meegwet

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.

Mother's Day and Father's Day Brunch



Halloween



Children's Christmas VTP Christmas

Developing Projects

Nadwé assists young Aboriginals from Val-d'Or by motivating and supervising them in the pursuit of their educational, professional, creation or entrepreneurial projects to access employment. It builds upon a culturally relevant and safe approach to stimulate young people's interest in the labour market, and increase their access to economic life.



Kinawit is a promising Aboriginal model of social economy enterprise in cultural tourism. The Kinawit cultural site will become a place for the expression and transmission of Aboriginal culture that promotes Aboriginal participation in the economy and a better understanding and cohabitation of peoples. The tourism project will welcome its first visitors in summer 2016.

Mam8i Madziin is an innovative model of service organisation in Aboriginal housing aimed at improving Aboriginal people's quality of life by fostering harmonious cohabitation and fighting poverty, homelessness and social exclusion, with a will to assist community members in achieving individual and collective wellness, and their aspirations.





Celebrating 40 Years of Friendship

Gabriel-Commanda Walk

1500 walkers gathered in the name of solidarity between peoples! The 15th edition of the *Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* **put the focus on health** thanks to our spokespersons Dr. Stanley Vollant, surgeon and instigator of the Innu Meshkenu Walk, and Jacques Boissonneault, president and director general of the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre of Abitibi-Témiscamingue.



Mëmëgwashi Gala

196 awardees were honoured at the 12th Gala recognising Aboriginal students, with a dynamic and original entertaining concept. The Mëmëgwashi Distinction Award was presented to the five actors of the movie "3 Histoires d'Indiens".

National Aboriginal Day

3000 spectators celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre and National Aboriginal Day with Biz, Shaut, Bourbon Gauthier and Florent Vollant.



Open Doors Day

120 people, partners and community members came for an interactive visit of the Friendship Centre and kiosks prepared by the employees. A community supper concluded the day.

The exhibition **Because Urbanity is Also Anicinabe**, produced and curated by *La Boîte Rouge vif*, was inaugurated and will be displayed at the Val-d'Or Exhibition Centre **for a minimum of two years**. Visitors are invited to discover four aspects of First Peoples' current urban realities.



11th Promotion of Life Week – Kišetan "Going Back to Our Roots"

A record participation of **1030 people over 4 days** of activities for the 11th Promotion of Life Week that was held in a spirit of respect for customs and sacred teachings.



Mëmëgwashi Calendar – 1st edition

The first edition of the Mëmëgwashi Calendar was distributed to **400 partners** and to the **196 awardees** of the 2014 Gala. The calendar highlights our students' perseverance and academic achievement.

Our **website** was revamped! **www.caavd.ca** and a special issue of the **Centre's Notebook** was produced for the **40th anniversary**.

Expressing Our Solidarity

Sisters in Spirit Vigil: About 100 participants attended a first vigil to honour murdered or missing Aboriginal women.



Working Together and Taking Part in Decision-making

- The Centre has a seat on the Directors General Committee of the MRC Vallée-de-l'Or and on the board of directors of the Vallée-de-l'Or's Health and Social Services Centre.
- Consultation with partners of the MRC Vallée-de-l'Or with a view to defining local priorities as part of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS).



Speaking out

- Interuniversity Social Work Symposium held at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue.
- DIALOG Network's International Forum on Research and Knowledge.
- Symposium organised by the Fribourg University in Switzerland (in collaboration with DIALOG) under the theme of "Une responsabilité inavouée, des droits bafoués" (Unadmitted responsibility, violated rights), under the auspices of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO.

The **DIALOG** Network and the Quebec Friendship Centres renewed their partnership with the research project titled **"The Aboriginal world and the challenges of living together: governance, multiculturalism and citizenship"**.



Giving a voice

- Evaluation of the impacts of our programs and services with the members of the community.
- 2015-2025 strategic orientation and planning processes.

Medical Transportation Service

The staff responded to **2621 requests** for medical transportation. We now have an increasing number of requests from Nunavik.

76 employees working at the Friendship on March 31, 2015
43 Aboriginal employees
57% of Aboriginal employees

15 employees received the training **Pewaseha – Aboriginal Culture and Realities**, delivered by UQAT's continuing education services





Community Development

Its mandate is the well-being of the Aboriginal community by strengthening community life through mobilisation and dynamic, collective and individual appropriation. Its empowerment approach is based on supporting capacity-building and development of individuals' self-esteem and critical awareness as well as participation, involvement and networking.

Last March, the staff engaged in a reflection process on the desired orientations for the sector. The renewed mandate will focus on the obstacles to Aboriginal participation in the socioeconomic and political life.

Youth Services

6 - 12 year-olds

Mohiganech Club (Little Wolves)

Activities and workshops offered to support children in their academic learning, family relations and socialisation.

53 families reached including **77** children and **86** parents

Homework support

30 children reached

Attendance rate in francophone and anglophone groups was **90 %** for **177** hours of homework support.

Social Club

50 children reached

Average of **15** attendances per pedagogical day

Summer Day Camp

49 children reached

Attendance rate of **88 %** for **6** weeks of activities



10 years-olds to young adults

Miskwâ Mikâna (Red Trail)

Illegal and prescription drug abuse prevention.

Activities in global health and collective projects to make better informed decisions, act positively and promote healthy lifestyles.

137 youth reached

123 activities carried out

862 attendances

Average of **7** attendances per activity

Ikwésis (Girls and young women)

Group activities for a full civic, political and community involvement.

32 girls and women reached

28 activities carried out

154 attendances

Kabadu (Portage)

Secondary level homework support and preparation for exams

19 youth reached

530 attendances for **192** hours of homework support

Madjimâkwîn (Hang on!)

Support and assistance to young Aboriginals aged **18** to **24** to develop a life plan.

11 participants including **6** new ones during the year.

Educational Pilot Project

Initiative put forward with the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec to improve school success and perseverance of Aboriginal youth in Val-d'Or and Senneterre by developing collaborative relations between schools, families and the various services offered by Friendship Centres.



Community Services

Do8dei8in Elders Group (Visiting and sharing knowledge)

Cultural and social activities aimed at improving living conditions by sharing knowledge, valuing Elders and developing networks.

38 members reached

12 activity days, including one fundraiser

140 attendances

Average of **12** attendances per activity

Weekly Café-Meetings

22 activities carried out

330 attendances

Average of **15** attendances per activity

Cross-generational Activities

Val-d'Or s'embellit : **43** members present

Summer days: **8** activities carried out
Over **230** attendances

Traditional days: Summer : **60** members present
Winter : **58** members present

Handicraft workshops: **31** evenings offered
415 attendances

Family collective kitchens: **4** activity days
72 attendances including cook apprentices
3142 servings cooked

Health circle (Advisory Committee) **11** meetings held
76 attendances



An evaluation conducted with 34 respondents shows that:

59 % of the sampled respondents said they participated "at least once a week" in the Friendship Centre's activities.

94 % of the sampled respondents said that the Friendship Centre's activities helped them adopting healthy lifestyles.



Social Development

Its mandate is to contribute to the growth and well-being of the individuals of the Aboriginal community by offering psychoeducational and psychosocial services that assist in creating a balance in the soul, body, mind and heart (holistic), allowing for recognition and development of individuals' capacity, abilities and competencies (empowerment).

Intervention Services

The Psychosocial Intervention Services are intended to improve the living condition of Val-d'Or's Aboriginal people, through culturally relevant interventions centered on prevention and support. This year, our team made **7947** interventions with **1279** different persons, an increase of **37 %** of persons reached as compared to 2013-2014.

Our Intervention Services include the following programs:

Eagle's Nest
Fighting homelessness and residential instability.
2548 interventions with **156** different persons.

Willie's Place
Day drop-in and respite centre for homeless and wandering persons.
392 interventions with **431** different persons.

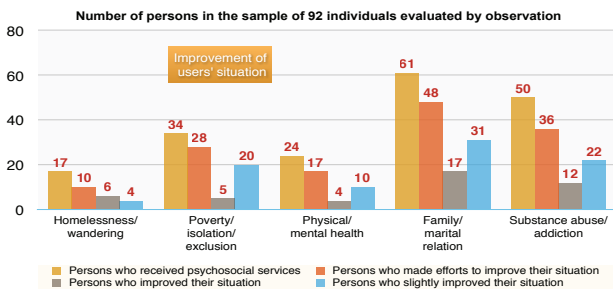
Pibamadzi
"Walking to the pace of the environment"
Fighting HIV/AIDS as part of the outreach work.
3349 outreach meetings.

Miskwâ Sinibân
"Red ribbon"
Fighting HIV/AIDS and other STBBI, using a support group formula.
1767 interventions with **238** persons.

Mino Pimadiziwin
"Living in peace with life: past, present and future"
Health support to former residential school students and their families.
718 interventions with **201** persons.

The Intervention Services reception is an important entry point to our services.
511 meetings with **289** new persons.

An evaluation conducted with **92 users of the Intervention Services** gave the following results:



- **55 persons** from the sample improved their quality of life (**60 %**).
- Among the **50** sampled persons having benefited from a psychosocial follow-up related to drug/alcohol abuse or addiction, **34** persons improved their situation (**68 %**).
- Among the **43** sampled persons who did not always have a fixed residence during the past year, **25** now have a fixed residence (**58 %**).

A Small Project Doing Great Things

Last winter, the opening of Willie's Place, in partnership with several local organisations (including La Piaule and the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre of Abitibi-Témiscamingue - Vallée-de-l'Or), has allowed reducing the distress of homeless and wandering persons in Val-d'Or, educating the public and increasing our knowledge on this reality.



Early Childhood and Family Services

The Aboriginal Head Start Program fosters healthy child development and supports extended families in enhancing their parental experience. This year, our team served **67 children aged 0 to 5** and their family.



According to an evaluation conducted with **65 children aged 0 to 5** and their families:

- **91 %** of the parents participated in the Friendship Centre's family activities with their child.
- **89 %** of the parents were involved in their child's educational process.
- **75 %** of the evaluated children improved their language development, and **89 %** significantly reinforced their social skills.

Abinojic

The Friendship Centre's social perinatal services are currently being developed. The prenatal course, the major initiative this year, is highly successful within the community. This service has reached **49** women and **33** children aged 0 to 24 months.



Minowé Clinic

The Minowé Clinic, a resource integrated to the health and social services network of Vallée-de-l'Or, served **653 different clients** since its opening in January 2011.

The Clinic in numbers:

- 161** new persons came to the Minowé Clinic, and **3222** interventions were made:
- Pre- and post-natal follow-up: **23** mothers
- Birth control: **26** women
- Vaccination 0-5 year-olds: **36** children
- Flu vaccination: **244** persons
- Diabetes follow-up: **35** persons
- Social intervention: **56** families (**49** adults, **12** children 0-5 year-olds and **44** children 6-18 year-olds)





Social Economy

Aboriginal social economy, through its culturally relevant approach and its social innovation initiatives, contributes to the collective wealth, skills development and recognition as well as to the inclusion and promotion of Aboriginal labor for a full participation in the economy and social life.

The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre is recognised for its vision and pioneering approach to development. It is within that spirit that the new projects of our social economy sector will be deployed in the coming year. A new activity sector will soon be part of our accomplishments with the implementation of the Kinawit tourism project at our cultural site, in a boreal forest environment.



THE REVENUES GENERATED BY THE SALE OF GOODS AND SERVICES FROM THE SOCIAL ECONOMY SECTOR AMOUNT TO NEARLY

\$ 1 000 000
ANNUALLY



Our Employees

On a daily basis, our 23 employees keep busy receiving clients, cooking, cleaning, and serving meals in order to make our guests feel at home and provide a most pleasant stay or visit at the Friendship Centre. Thanks to our team's commitment and involvement, services are offered seven days a week.

70 % of them are Aboriginal.



Reception And Lodging

In 2014-2015, the occupancy rate for the **24 rooms** accommodating up to **54** guests was **63 %**, representing **11,360 person-nights**.



Food Services

The Food Services team is at the core of all the Friendship Centre's activities and contributes to the success of our many events. Food Services offer healthy, comfort and home-made style meals at an affordable price to the general public. The weekly menu and the opening hours are available on our website.

With its 70 places, the Centre's cafeteria served **52,722 meals** in the past year, and provided **33,800 snacks** to the children of the Abinodjic-Miguam Early Childhood Centre as well as to the Centre's different programs such as homework support and early stimulation groups.



Arts And Crafts

The boutique display is an attraction for visitors and constitutes an opportunity for discussing, sharing and promoting the unique and authentic creations of Aboriginal artisans in the region. The richness of Aboriginal culture is expressed through these creations diversely inspired by the different nations of origin of the artists and artisans.



Skills Development Path

Skills development paths are a powerful individual and collective leverage for empowerment, cultural reinforcement and pride. With their positive impacts on the participants, their families and communities, this training contributes to stimulating and transforming Val-d'Or's economic and social life.



WABIDIJAN "Show me"

Wabidijan offers an opportunity to **12 Aboriginal youth aged 18 to 30**, divided in two cohorts, to acquire culturally relevant work experience in the hotel and restaurant industry. The training includes workshops on skills and employability enhancement, traineeship with a trainer-journeyman, and on-the-job traineeship.

