



Photos: PAUL BRINDAMOUR ET  
VAL-D'OR NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE  
Illustration: T.J. MEDIA  
Graphism: PEGGY TRUDEL



## ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Centre d'amitié autochtone de Val-d'Or  
Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre  
40th Anniversary



1272, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Val-d'Or (Québec) J9P 6W6  
Tel.: 819 825-6857 • Fax.: 819 825-7515  
info@caavd.ca - www.caavd.ca



### A Word from the Executive Director

Forty years ago, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre took roots in the heart of the city. It has since become a symbol of resilience and assertion for First Peoples. All the groundwork laid in the Centre's history testify to its creativeness and perseverance that allowed our organisation to take its rightful place within society.

Our Centre has become a key player in the community. Solicited by both native and non native official bodies, it is recognised as the preferred contact organisation on urban issues concerning First Nations in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Our Centre enjoys a strong credibility and an excellent reputation reaching beyond the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region. The foundations upon which our four-decade legacy of friendship and sharing is resting reflect the people forming our community: unwavering and hardy.

With a respectful and diplomatic approach, our Centre, an architect of friendship between peoples, has become the leader of renewed relations between citizens. Since the creation of the Friendship Centre in 1974, our achievement in terms of peaceful coexistence in Val-d'Or speaks for itself. Forty years later, our efforts to reduce social inequalities, break down the barriers of indifference and fight racism and discrimination are paying off. And tangible results are there to prove it, such as the participation of 1600 people in the Gabriel-Commanche Walk for solidarity among peoples in March 2014 and the successful outcome of the Kijaté initiative after 6 years of struggle, thus paving the way for the construction of 24 social housing units for Aboriginal families.

Of course, our collective success is measured by the array of services provided to the community, the quality of our partnerships and the scope of our infrastructures. But more importantly, our collective success is measured by the positive changes the community was able to implement for itself. As an agent of social change for the well-being of their members, the Aboriginal community of Val-d'Or contributes to making the town a nurturing and enabling environment for all citizens.

Bravery and endurance characterised our ancestors, just as they characterise the Friendship Centre's journey over the past 40 years. Inspired by the vitality of our forefathers and foremothers, we have built an institution in the image of our community: human, engaged and motivated by the desire to succeed.

If the past is any indication of the future, we can certainly anticipate a long life for the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre!

Edith Cloutier  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Congratulations!

**CITATION OF EXCELLENCE** awarded by the National Association of Friendship Centres: **our Friendship Centre ranked fourth out of the 122 centres in Canada** for the quality of its services and management.

The **NELSON MAYER YOUTH CONTRIBUTION** Award from the National Association of Friendship Centres to **Wanda Crépeau Etapp**, youth representative on our Friendship Centre's Board of Directors.

Our executive director **Edith Cloutier** was made a **MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA**.





## Word from the President

As president and on behalf of the Board members, I am honored to present the 40<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre. 40 years of friendship! 40 years developing relationships with our community to initiate a dialog, pave the way and give a voice to Aboriginal people coping with the urban reality.

We understand that even in the city, we still occupy our millennium-old territories and we carry on our traditions and values of solidarity, sharing, family, friendship. We have felt the power of these values in this past year of strong emotions for many of us, when we often had to pull together and stay strong. Staying strong to bid farewell to our travelling brothers in life: Rheal, Roland, Willie, Dave, Toby, Mylena... Staying strong to go through the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its gut-wrenching testimonies that shocked the whole country. Staying united to emerge stronger than before.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Promotion of Life Week under the theme of "At the Dawn of the 8<sup>th</sup> Fire" has shown all the benefits we can draw from our ancestors' teachings. It was heart warming to see how our youth receive and integrate these teachings, which allows us believing in this 8<sup>th</sup> Fire of reconciliation and equality between peoples as predicted by our ancestors. This hope is still carried by the Friendship Centre in its daily work. In 2013-2014, this work was rewarded by the enthusiastic response of some 80 partners invited last January to a forum on Aboriginal urban life and by their obvious interest in paving a new common way that recognises First Peoples' millennium old contribution.

The Centre's work was also rewarded by a record participation in the Gabriel-Commanda Walk and the long awaited approval by the Val-d'Or Town Council of the Kijaté social housing project. This work is especially rewarded by the pride of the 17 persevering Aboriginal students of the 6<sup>th</sup> Odabi cohort who successfully completed a skills development training that opens up to a promising future and a rightful place in society.

Widjike, "the ones I travel with", these are all the members who have been part of the Friendship Centre's great team over the last 40 years to whom I give special thanks. Thanks also to the partners, elected officials, decision-makers and citizens who open up to a different reality and accept to shake the hand of friendship that we have been extending for the past 40 years.

Happy 40th anniversary and long live our Friendship Centre!

  
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

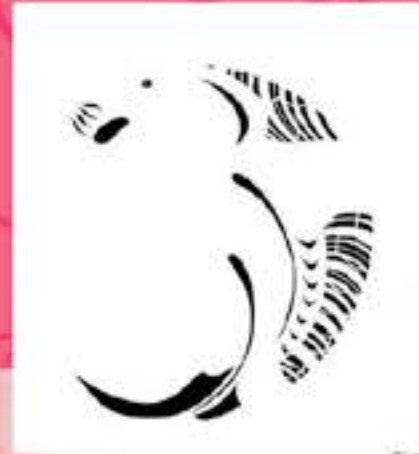
Leader of a committed indigenous civil society, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre actively contributes to the social, community, economic and cultural development of the community through innovative and proactive strategies.

### VALUES

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

"The most important is not to do everything perfectly and completely. It is rather to make strides in the direction mutually agreed upon, towards a global, cross-cutting and outreach vision."

Edith Cloutier  
Executive Director



# Administration

## Living together

**Gabriel-Commanda Walk 2014**  
**Citizen Engagement in Val-d'Or**  
**1800 participants** gathered during this 14th Walk. Thanks to our spokespersons: Pierre Corbell, mayor of Val-d'Or, Elizabeth Larouche, former minister for Aboriginal Affairs and MNA for Abitibi-East, and Roméo Saganash, MP for Abitibi-James Bay-Nunavik-Eeyou.

**National Aboriginal Day**  
**1500 people** attended the outdoor show on National Aboriginal Day, one full of talents, including many emerging artists, followed by Kevin Boudrias and his band, and Albertan country singer Nathan Cunningham.



## Pride

**Mémégwashi Gala**  
**258 awardees** were honored at the 11th Aboriginal student recognition Gala, facilitated by masterful emcees, with a moment of deep emotion when the Phillips family was awarded the Mémégwashi Distinction.



**11th edition of the "Catch your Dreams" agenda**  
 Design by youth and inspired by the Friendship Centre's 40th anniversary.

**Innu Meshkenu Walk with Dr Stanley Vollant**  
**60 walkers** joined Dr Stanley Vollant during his walk through Val-d'Or in September.



**10th Promotion of Life Week At the Dawn of the 8th Fire**  
 The Week was unprecedentedly popular with a record number of **600 participants**. Traditional teachings by Elders were at the core of the activities: a symbolic sacred fire was lit at the cultural site.

## Pursuing our reflection Focusing our actions

Collaboration in academic research and the renewal of the **ODENA Research Alliance**, for a better understanding of the issues concerning First Peoples in the city.



Hosting of international partners as part of the "Mino Madjiwin - Urban Aboriginals' Health, Wellness and Quality of Life" initiative for the renewal of the ODENA Alliance.

Mobilisation of 80 partners from the MRC at the "Aboriginal People in the City - Issues, Challenges and Solutions" Forum in January.

Contribution to the RCAAQ position paper to the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat for the development of an action plan to counter racism and discrimination against Aboriginal people.

Participation in the consultations of the Société d'habitation du Québec for the development of a national housing policy.

Response to the tabling of the Québec government's Policy on Homelessness.

Participation in the discussions lead by the Town of Val-d'Or to elaborate a Social Development Policy.

## Medical Transportation

The team answered **2782 requests** for medical transportation services.

## Human Resources

**66 employees** at the Centre as of March 31, 2014  
**33 Aboriginal employees**  
**50 % of Aboriginal employees**



The whole Centre's team engaged in a 2014-2019 strategic orientations process in order to maximize the resources provided to the community.

# 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.

## Childhood 5-12 years

**Mohiganech Club "Little Wolves"**  
**48 families reached**, including 69 children and 74 parents

**Homework Support**  
**40 children reached**  
 Attendance rate of 91 % for French-speaking and English-speaking groups, for 187.5 hours of homework support.

**Social Club**  
**54 children reached**  
 Average of 16 attendances per pedagogical day

**Summer Day Camp**  
**43 children reached**  
 Attendance rate of 79 % for 6 weeks of activities



## Youth 13-29 years

**Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth CCAY**  
**136 young adults reached**  
**160 activities**  
**3337 participations** in the program  
 Average of 8 attendances per activity

**Kabadu "Portage"**  
 Homework Support and preparation for exams  
**384 attendances** for **202.5 hours** of homework support

## Community

**Do8dei8in Elders Group "Visiting and sharing knowledge"**  
 Cultural and social activities aimed at ending isolation by the sharing of knowledge, appreciation and networking.  
**38 members reached**  
**13 days of activities**, including 1 fundraiser  
**134 attendances**  
 Average of 10 attendances per activity

**Weekly Cafe-Meetings**  
**129 members reached**  
**22 activities**  
**378 attendances**  
 Average of 14 attendances per activity

**Kin Odja "It depends on you!"**  
 Promotion of healthy lifestyles  
**327 members reached** through the project activities,  
**264 members** through sports activities and  
**94 members** through cooking workshops and community kitchens

## Intergenerational Activities

**Val-d'Or s'embellit :** **31 members** participated

**Summer Days :** **8 activities**  
**233 attendances**

**Traditional Days:** Summer : **34 participants**  
 Winter : **116 participants**

**Arts & crafts workshops :** **32 evenings**  
**203 attendances**

**Community kitchens for families:** **4 days of cooking**  
**35 attendances** for a total of **19 families**  
**2373 portions** cooked

**Health Circle (advisory committee)** **11 meetings**  
**130 attendances**

An evaluation conducted with 60 persons reveals that:  
 • **53 %** of the sampled respondents said that they increased the frequency of sports or physical activities  
 • **80 %** of the respondents said that they increased their motivation to choose and eat healthy food



# Social development

Its 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 the recognition and development of individuals' capacity, abilities and competencies (empowerment).

## Intervention Services

The psychosocial intervention services are aimed at improving the living conditions of Aboriginal people in Val-d'Or through culturally relevant interventions based on prevention and support. Our team conducted **6598 interventions** with **809 different people** during the year.

Our intervention services include the following projects:

**Eagle's Nest**  
Fight against homelessness and residential instability  
**2728 interventions** with **253 different persons**

**Pikamuda**  
"Walk to the rhythm of the environment"  
Fight against HIV/AIDS, as part of the Outreach Program.  
**1225 outreach meetings**

**Mikwé Sinihán**  
"Red ribbon"  
Fight against HIV/AIDS and other STBIs with a support group approach.  
**504 interventions** with **198 persons**

**Mine Pimadziwin**  
"Living in peace with life, past, present and future"  
Health support for former Indian Residential School students and their families.  
**614 interventions** with **240 persons**

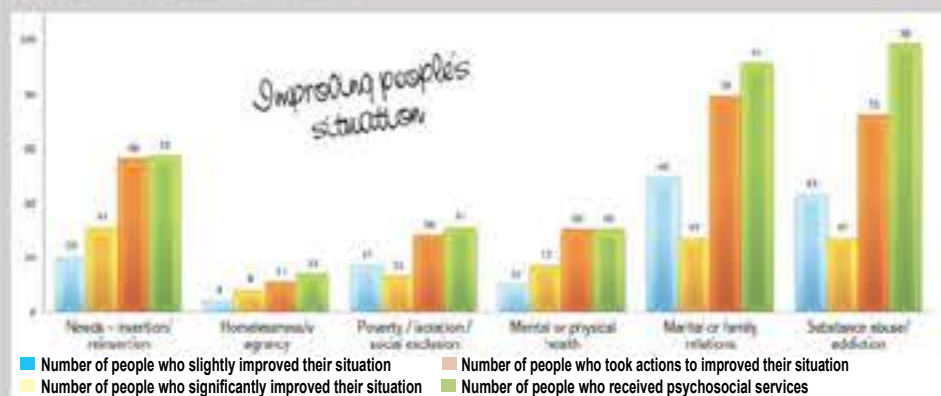
According to an evaluation conducted with **39 children and their families**:  
**85 %** of the parents participate in the Friendship Centre's family activities with their child.  
**75 %** of the parents get involved in their child's development.  
Language and social skills development are respectively acquired by **31** and **34** children out of **39** children evaluated.

## Early Childhood and Family Services

The Aboriginal Head Start program promotes healthy child development and supports the extended families in the development of parenting skills. Our team has served **76 children** aged 0-5 years and their families during the year.

*The child's well-being and the parents' involvement are central to the Early Childhood and Family Services.*

An evaluation conducted with **136 Intervention Services users** provided the following results:



- 90 persons said they improved their quality of life (66% of the sampled persons)
- 76 persons said they improved their family or marital situation, out of the 91 sampled persons having benefited from psychosocial follow-up (84% of the persons)
- From the 39 sampled persons who did not always have a home address in the past year, 16 now have a permanent address (41% of the persons)

## Minowé Clinic:

The Minowé Clinic, a resource integrated to the health and social services network of Val-d'Or, opened **492 different files** for people encountered since its beginning in January 2011.

### The Clinique in numbers:

- 217 new arrivals at the Minowé Clinic and 2907 interventions were performed:
- Pre and postnatal monitoring : 22 mothers
- Contraception : 23 women
- Vaccination 0-5 years : 43 children
- Influenza vaccination: 270 people
- Diabetes monitoring : 13 people
- Social interventions : 61 families
- (76 adults, 30 children 0-5 years and 69 youths 6-18 years)

### Great accomplishments in the Social Development Sector:

This year, the Early Childhood and Family Services implemented workshops to assist children. These workshops are aimed at promoting child development in a small group setting.

The Intervention Services team engaged in an outreach approach to reach out to the community members through the Centre's activities, on-site and home visits.



# 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.

Our Social Economy sector is booming! Following the restructuring and consolidation of certain services, we must now develop our own collective business model in order to maintain and improve the services offered through our programs, the old ones and especially the new ones as they will hopefully be many to start in the coming year.

THE INCOME GENERATED BY THE SALE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FROM THE SOCIAL ECONOMY SECTOR AMOUNTS TO NEARLY **\$ 1,000,000 ANNUALLY**

## Employees

Everyday day, close to 20 employees from the reception, lodging and food services contribute to the success of our mission by investing their talents for the benefit of the community. Thanks to their commitment and involvement, services are provided 7 days a week.

**80% of them are Aboriginal.**



## Food Services

Our food services offer comfort and healthy meals with a home flavor, at an affordable price. The weekly menus and opening hours are posted on our website.

With its 70 seating places, the Centre's cafeteria served **57,512 meals** in the past year and catered **36,709 snacks** to the children of the Aberdji-Miguam Early Childhood Centre as well as to the different programs such as homework support and early stimulation groups.



## Reception and Lodging

The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre is a unique cultural anchoring. Our centralised reception quickly refers people to all of our services, which increases our efficiency in responding to our members' and client's needs. The lodging services located on the 2nd floor can accommodate up to **54 guests**. In 2013-2014, our occupancy rate has reached **63%**, for a total of **11,497 person-nights**.



## Arts & Crafts

With a view to promoting Aboriginal arts and crafts, a boutique counter displays the talent and creativity of the region's Aboriginal artists and artisans. The very essence of Aboriginal culture can be found in the exhibited works, all authentic and exclusive.

## Skills development path

Skills development paths are powerful individual and collective leverages for empowerment, cultural reinforcement and Aboriginal pride. Their positive impact on participants, their families and their community as well as on their social integration and employability create a true social rebuilding process that is currently stimulating and changing Val-d'Or's social life. With the termination of Odabi's 3-year funding, we took many steps that give us hope for others skills development projects to start soon.

34 participants in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Odabi cohorts have graduated



*Situation of participants in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Odabi cohorts at the end of their skills development path.*

**Madjimikwin "Hang on!"**  
Support and assistance to Aboriginal youth aged 16-24. Provides culturally relevant tools to develop a life plan.  
**21 participants** including **13 new ones** in the course of the year

