



FINDING OUR POWER TOGETHER

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



Nicole Ineese-Nash

As we journey into reflecting on this past year, feelings of profound gratitude, immense pride, and a deep sense of admiration wash over me.

In 2022, we embraced a series of new beginnings. We breathed life into our in-person events, stepped into our new home base in downtown Toronto, and fostered new partnerships. While we traversed through an unpredictable landscape marked by the ongoing pandemic and funding challenges, we drew strength from the resilience and tenacity of our Indigenous community. It is their power that became our guiding light.

And the outcomes? They truly embodied the spirit of unity and resilience. We touched the lives of over 100 individuals through our programs, secured substantial funding, and crafted new paths with our arts-based programs, film projects, and youth traditional ceremonies. As I look back, I am heartened by the increased sharing of teachings and ceremonies, a testament to our collective power and passion.

While we were navigating the tumultuous waters of this past year, the real force behind our resilience was our community—our dedicated staff, committed student interns, our supportive board, and every individual who is a part of our wider community. Our journey is testimony to the fact that when we find our power together, we create something larger than ourselves.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Looking ahead, I am filled with a sense of eager anticipation. Our vision for the coming year includes more community visits across Canada, improved mental health support, and expanding our reach. The path forward will be challenging, but I am confident that by leaning on each other, we will continue to build a stronger community.

I extend an invitation for you to share in our journey, to invite us to your community, to donate if you can. Each interaction, each contribution, big or small, empowers us and brings us closer to our vision.

In this moment of reflection, the lesson that resonates most is that we are stronger together. Our collective power is what allows us to grow, learn, and find the strength to navigate whatever lies ahead. I am reminded every day that everyone holds knowledge and gifts, and it is our shared responsibility to bring those gifts to the world.

I hope this message finds you well, inspires you to harness your potential, and encourages you to uplift others to do the same. This is how we find our power together. As we move into the next year, we do so with renewed energy, shared power, and an unwavering commitment to our journey, together.

Miigwetch

Nicole Ineese-Nash

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

Finding Our Power Together (FOPT) is an Indigenous-led non-profit organization supporting Indigenous youth to access support and relationships that enable them to thrive. FOPT offers a variety of therapeutic and educational programs designed to develop community, increase capacity, and promote wholistic wellbeing, particularly to save young people from preventable death. We collectively understand the value in bringing together young people and community members from various communities to share resources and maintain connection; We know we can find our power together.

OUR HISTORY



FOPT began as a community-based initiative in Nibinamik First Nation in 2016, founded by Indigenous youth from Nibinamik and other communities in Treaty 9 territory. At this time, many young people had attempted or completed suicide in Nibinamik and surrounding communities. Youth in Nibinamik sought to support their own people and worked with members of Ryerson University to film a documentary video,

sharing their experiences of systemic discrimination and colonialism. More than that though, they shared their messages of hope and support for the young people in their community and across Turtle Island.

This film premiered at a fundraising event in 2017 at Ryerson University in Toronto which brought together nearly 400 Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies to share in collective solidarity. We have since grown to support communities and youth across Canada in learning and developing skills and practices to promote life and wellbeing. We registered as a formal nonprofit in May 2020 and have shifted to online support as a result of COVID-19.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where:

- Indigenous young people are rooted in who they are with access to cultural knowledge, language, and ceremony
- Where Indigenous youth have a strong commitment to life through their interconnections to others, to land, and to spirit
- Where Indigenous youth have support from their families, communities, and societies to develop the skills and gifts they would like to
- Where Indigenous youth understand that they are valued, important, and belong
- Where they know their power and use it to help others

Our ultimate goal is to end preventable death by suicide in Indigenous communities and support our young people to thrive.

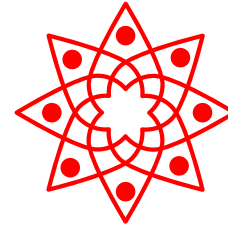
OUR MISSION

Our mission is to support Indigenous young people to realize their own priorities and goals and gain access to various supports they may benefit from. We work towards this goal through developing and facilitating programs and services that: connect Indigenous youth with one another and Indigenous mentors/professionals; utilize traditional Indigenous practices and cultures; increase social connectedness and resilience through group and individual counseling; provide training, skills development opportunities, and activities for practical learning and growth; and promote pride in Indigenous identity and various Indigenous lifeways through sharing and relationship building.

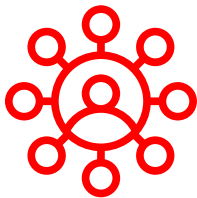
OUR PRINCIPLES



We promote **culture** by incorporating Indigenous teachings, values and language into our mental health practice, where appropriate.



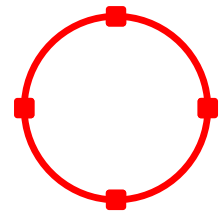
We encourage **interconnection** by welcoming relationships with the land, ancestors and spirit in our mental health practice.



Relationality is fostering caring, reciprocal and respectful relationships with the self, individual and communities in order to nurture the connection we have with all things in creation.



Self Discovery and Determination is supporting the youth to better understand themselves and their emotions and their reactions in order to provide appropriate options for their health



We support **wholism** though honoring individuals in all facets of the self and promoting self-acceptance.



We encourage the exploration of balanced living through reflection and practice of care within all aspects of the self to achieve **balance restoration**.



Context Specificity; we actively acknowledge environmental and historical factors that have and continue to impact each individual and their lived-reality and adapt to suit the specific needs of the individuals and communities.

OUR TEAM

Our team is an interdisciplinary group of staff, students, and volunteers who work holistically to support community needs. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members support one another and the community to reach their self-determined goals through the sharing of their various backgrounds in Indigenous worldviews, Child and Youth care, early childhood education and development, psychology, social work, and arts-based methods.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JUDY FINLAY

JUDY FINLAY Board Member

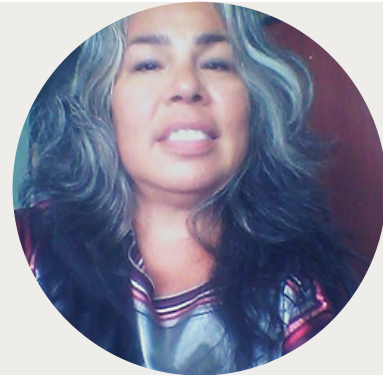
Judy Finlay is an associate professor and graduate program director in the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University and has been a faculty member in the School of Child and Youth Care since 2007. She is currently the co-chair and principal investigator of the Cross-Over Youth Project, which is designed to learn ways to interrupt the trajectory of youth in the care of the state from entering the youth justice system. Finlay was the longest standing child and youth advocate in Canada and was Ontario's chief advocate from 1991 to 2007. She has worked for more than three decades in the areas of child welfare and children's mental health.



CECILE AKIWENZIE

CECILE AKIWENZIE Board Member

Cecile Akiwenzie-Martin is an Ojibway First Nations woman of the Turtle Clan originally from Neyaashiinigmiing and married into Mohawk tradition, currently residing in Six Nations of the Grand River First Nations Territory. Cecile is also a mother, a Nokomis, a Lodge Conductor, a Sundancer, an Aboriginal Midwife, RPN, Reflexologist, Aromatherapist, Artist and Entrepreneur. Cecile has received their Spirit name (Manitou Waabshki Mshkiniinh), completed their first strawberry fast, received songs, sun danced in South Dakota and was trained to conduct the Sacred Grandmother Full Moon Lodge. Upon completion, Cecile received a Sacred Pipe for the lodge all under the instruction of the Late Frank Ewart Settee. Cecile has now over 20 years of experience and training in various areas of health and well-being work, providing services to families and people of all ages and from all walks of life.



ARLENE HACHE

ARLENE HACHE Board Member

Arlene Hache is a grassroots woman who has experienced homelessness and traumatic impacts of childhood violence. She currently sits as a member of the National Poverty Council. Arlene founded, and over two decades, led an urban-based family resource centre that provided support to marginalized women and their families, the majority of which were Indigenous. She is well-known across Canada's Arctic as an advocate for social change and in recognition of her work was awarded the Order of Canada in 2009 and then the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. Of equal importance, Arlene was honoured with a Star Blanket ceremony guided by Wisdom Keepers and hosted by Keepers of the Circle, an Indigenous Hub in Northeastern Ontario. Arlene is a published author and has participated on several research teams that give voice to people with lived experience.



OUR TEAM

CURRENT STAFF

NICOLE INEESSE-NASH

NICOLE INEESSE-NASH
Director

Nicole Ineese-Nash is an Anishinaabe (Oji-Cree) scholar and a member of Constance Lake First Nation. Nicole is currently completing a PhD in Social Justice Education and Indigenous Health at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto where she is researching land-based education as a mechanism for youth leadership and spiritual healing. Nicole completed both her BA and masters degrees in Early Childhood Studies and Psychology at Ryerson University. She is the director and co-founder of Finding Our Power Together: A non-profit organization providing mental health services, cultural programming, and educational support to Indigenous youth.



VANESSA NICHOLSON

VANESSA NICHOLSON
Land-Based Programs Coordinator

Vanessa is an Anishinaabe Child and Youth Counsellor and member of Sagamok Anishnawbek. She has an undergraduate degree in Forensic Psychology and a Master's in Child and Youth Care (CYC). She is currently a CYC Counsellor with the Toronto District School Board. She has years of experience working with youth of all backgrounds in a variety of capacities, but most specifically in First Nation Communities within Northern Ontario. Vanessa has a background in child and youth care, trauma-informed and community-based youth practices. Vanessa began her work with FOPT as a CYC placement student in Nibinamik First Nation in the 2018-2019 academic year as a requirement for completion of her graduate studies.



KAITLYN WILCOX

KAITLYN WILCOX
Program Administrative Coordinator

Ode'imín Mashkiki - Heart of the Medicine, Kaitlyn Wilcox (she/they) is a neurodivergent, mixed Potawatomi and settler Two-Spirit person. Their community relations come from Moose-Deer Point First Nation and Beausoleil Island. Born, raised, and residing in the Greater Toronto Area, Kaitlyn has been unapologetically embarking on a journey of self-discovery through the revitalization, reclamation, and reconnection of traditional ways of knowing, being, and doing, alongside their spirit, ancestors, kin, future generations, and the land.



OUR TEAM

CURRENT STAFF

MEGAN HOLMAN

MEGAN HOLMAN
Administrative Coordinator

Megan (she/her) is a Métis woman from Penetanguishene and Drummond Island. Her ancestry also has roots in Scotland, France, and Ireland. She is on a journey to connect, thrive, and fully embrace her Indigenous identity.

Megan has an undergraduate degree in Child and Youth Care and is currently working towards her Masters of CYC at the University of Strathclyde. She has worked to support young people in a variety of settings, including community, school, camp, and outdoor education.

Megan is immensely passionate about supporting young people and empowering them to embrace who they are as they walk through life. She hopes to one day have her own practice where she can use land-based practices and animals to help young people heal and connect with themselves and others.



NAN MCLEOD

NAN MCLEOD
Program Facilitator

Nan McLeod is an Anishnaabeg Queer Adoptee from Neyashiingimiiing; where the land is surrounded by water on three sides, she currently takes up space on the traditional lands of the Anishnaabeg & Haudenosaunee peoples but calls Tkaronto home. Nan has been a Support Worker (DSW/PSW/EA) with over ten years of experience providing safe, quality & compassionate care specializing in developmental disabilities, person-centred planning, and behaviours and inclusion.



JASMINE EHRET

JASMINE EHRET
Mental Health Mentor and Program Facilitator

Jasmine has worked within the school district as an Aboriginal education worker in British Columbia where she assisted youth with their education needs and provided social support. She has her undergraduate and Masters of Social Work degrees from Toronto Metropolitan University in Toronto. Jasmine comes from a family of educators and mental health providers and is proud to continue the family tradition. Jasmine is working toward becoming a clinical therapist specializing in Indigenous participants.



OUR TEAM

CURRENT STAFF

NYLE JOHNSTON

NYLE JOHNSTON Cultural Director

Nyle is an Anishnaabe artist, storyteller and Oshkaabewis (Traditional Helper) from Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. His art depicts the interconnectedness of all living things and incorporates teachings based on traditional knowledge. Nyle has worked on numerous projects supporting community organizations such as Anishnawbe Health Toronto, 7th Generation Image Makers, Chippewas of Nawash Health Centre, Taking!TGlobal, Canadian Roots Exchange, Lower Simcoe Underpass Mural Project, Bold Realities Project, Sketch Toronto and Ink Indigenous Tattoo Studio and Gallery. His work draws inspiration from woodland painters, Storytellers and the traditions of his Anishnaabe culture.



Ji Eun Park

Ji Eun Park Research Coordinator

Ji Eun (she/her) is a settler woman in Tkaronto, and her ethnic background is Korean. She has a master's degree in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Toronto and an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Studies.

Ji Eun has worked with children and families as an educator and in leadership roles for over nine years. She has a passion for early childhood education as she recognizes that a child's early years experiences are the foundations for their development and learning. She is interested in research emphasizing the importance of early years as they are essential to a child's future. Additionally, she would like to contribute to the early years sector, becoming more inclusive and affordable for parents. Ji Eun is excited to continue working as a Research Coordinator at Finding Our Power Together.



OUR TEAM

STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

The team here at Finding Our Power Together wants to sincerely thank all of the amazing students and volunteers that have selflessly supported us throughout 2022! It is with our students and volunteers that we are able to thrive as an organization to create meaningful programming and foster connections with Indigenous youth. Chi-miigwetch!

JENNIFER DOWNIE
KELSEY WHISSEL
ALINA PROVIDENCE
EMILY GARNICA
SHREYA KUMAR
RIMSHA AHMAD
YESMIN VEGA
ANGEL PERSAUD
AMANDA VO
JOANNA SPYRIDON
TYANA CHIBLOW
ANNA LE
LILY ZEPEDA
RIPPEN RAO
DARINA ERMAKOVA
SAIRA MURTUZA
SARAH DELABBIO
DARYA ABSAR

FORMER STAFF

DOROTA BIEDRZYCKI - ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR
EMMA ROBERS - MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANT
MICHELLE ORMSBY - MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR
EMILY JAMIESON - PEER SUPPORT WORKER
CLAIRE ZWICKER - PEER SUPPORT WORKER
MATHIEU BEAULIEU - PEER SUPPORT WORKER
CHELSEA FOLLETT - PEER SUPPORT WORKER
LAURIE LABRECQUE - PEER SUPPORT WORKER
KELSEY WHISSEL - YOUNG LEADERS CIRCLE ASSISTANT

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO IN 2022

Embarking on a new year always brings a surge of excitement and potential.

For Finding Our Power Together, 2022 was a testament to the fact that opportunities for growth and connection can bloom even in the midst of challenges. We passionately pursued our commitment to the Indigenous youth, offering innovative programs, building stronger relationships, and empowering individuals with the tools to lead fulfilling lives.

This year, we launched the seventh and eighth seasons of our in-person program, Bundle of Bundles (BOB), focusing on building relationships with spirit, land, and all of Creation, and fostering skills for a good life. The seasons, centered around mindfulness and engaging holistically, allowed our youth participants to build mindfulness skills, relationships, and learn ways to thrive.

We recognized the need for cultural mentorship, which was a new dimension in our mental health services. Our cultural mentorship program bridges the gap between traditional healing sessions, ceremonies, and Indigenous teachings to encourage self-determined growth.

Moreover, we initiated the Young Leaders Circle, offering Indigenous youth a platform to develop skills, explore challenges, and celebrate successes. In 2022, we prioritized developing and facilitating land-based programs for Indigenous youth, seeking to heal through connections with the land and Indigenous healing practices.

Adding to our endeavors was our collaboration with Bawaadan Collective on a short film project, a testimony to inter-generational knowledge exchange. The project has allowed us to engage our youth in the core concepts of filmmaking while also driving the project forward.

Together, these milestones have shaped an unforgettable year, and we are excited to share the details with you in the sections to follow. Here's a closer look at our journey through 2022.

OUR GROWING COMMUNITY

In 2022, Finding Our Power Together welcomed new participants to our programs and into our wonderful growing community. They engaged in programs such as Building Our Bundle, Young Leaders Circle, Mentorship, Moon Lodge Ceremonies, Youth Sweats, and our very first Helping Helpers Camp! The young people who have joined the Finding Our Power Together community span from all across Turtle Island. Seeing how our programs and supports have reached so many places and so many youth inspires us every day.

Our growing community is composed of Indigenous young people from varying regions and nations.

2022 COMMUNITY MEMBERS



A map of our community members throughout 2022.

OUR GROWING COMMUNITY

BY THE NUMBERS

BY PROGRAM AREA

TOTAL: 116

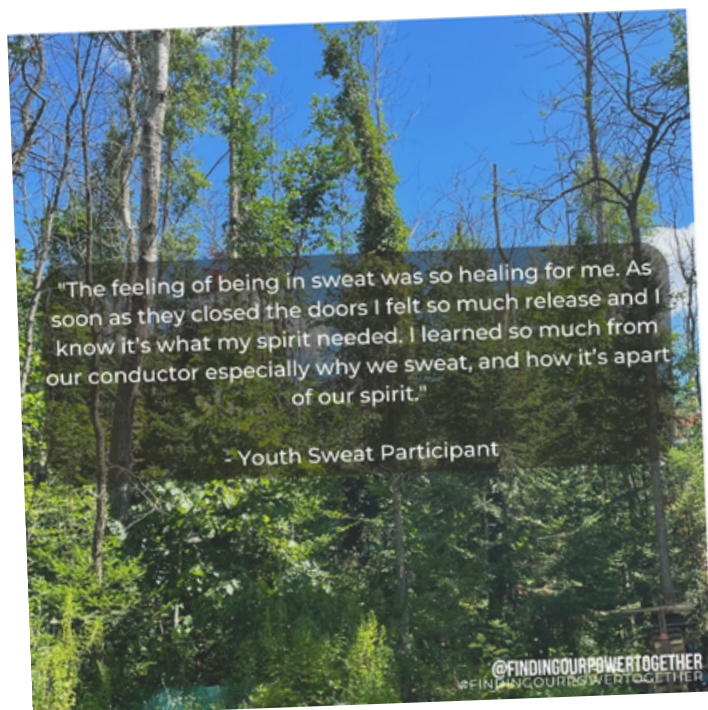
Building Our Bundle	Mentorship	Young Leaders Circle	Full Moon Gatherings	Youth Sweat Lodges	Telling Our Stories Together	Other
17	19	17	34	17	6	6

BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Province	Number of Participants
Alberta	1
British Columbia	2
Saskatchewan	1
Manitoba	4
Ontario	40
Quebec	3

Province	Number of Participants
Nova Scotia	4
New Brunswick	0
Northwest Territories	2
Newfoundland and Labrador	1
Unknown	24
Total	83

WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY



PROGRAMS

FOPT offers a variety of programs that seek to meet the needs of Indigenous youth all across Turtle Island. Our programs are particularly designed to offer relational support through mentorship, social connection, psychoeducation and skills development, cultural teachings and ceremonies, and youth-centered design.

The following section will detail all of the programs that we hosted in 2022.



BUILDING OUR BUNDLE



FULL MOON LODGE



MENTORSHIP



ORANGE HEART CLUB



HELPERS CAMP



**OSKATIS NIGAANIWEMOWIN -
THE WAY OF THE YOUNG LEADER**

BUILDING OUR BUNDLE

The Building Our Bundle Program (BOB) is a mental and spiritual health program to support Indigenous youth (aged 14-29) in developing mental health skills through a cultural framework. Modelled after the teachings of a traditional ceremonial bundle, the program seeks to uncover and build upon the inherent gifts and skills that all individuals can access to support their wellness journeys. The program was designed through the integration of Indigenous healing methods, mainstream mental health modalities (notably Dialectical Behaviour Therapy), and youth care therapeutic relationships.

Objectives	Activities to meet the objective	Outcome
Increase social connection for Indigenous youth	Indigenous youth building interpersonal skills	Participants learn interpersonal behavioral skills
Enhance access to cultural learning for Indigenous youth across Canada	Co-facilitation with cultural teachers	Participants engage in cultural teachings
Support mental health outcomes through psychoeducation	Support in group and individual sessions	Participants manage mental health concerns with support network

Through weekly online sessions, Indigenous youth connect with one another, youth workers, mental health professionals, and cultural teachers to explore various mental health skills and cultural practices. Each season is slightly different, with different mental health modalities employed and different teachings, reflecting the seasonal teachings appropriate for that time of year. Participants may choose to participate in synchronous online sessions in a group setting or engage with activities individually on their own time, with the support of a mentor. All participants are also encouraged to participate in weekly one-on-one mental health mentoring support from the FOPT team who work directly with young people on their self-determined goals.



SESSION OVERVIEW

Building Our Bundle was initially designed and piloted during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic as a way to connect with youth and support mental wellness in an online context. As social isolation and restrictions continued, Building our Bundle came to be a mainstay program offered on a seasonal basis, adapting to the needs and desires of our participants over time. In the following section, we will describe the different seasons of Building Our Bundle and the various adaptations that enabled us to support Indigenous youth during challenging times.

Season of BOB	Date	# of Total Participants
Season 7: Living a Good Life	March 9-April 27, 2022	8
Season 8: Nourishing Our Spirit	November 7-December 13, 2022	9
TOTALS:	2 SEASONS	17

SEASON 7: LIVING A GOOD LIFE

Season 7 of BOB was our first an 8-week in person program for Indigenous youth (aged 14-29) co-facilitated by traditional healer and helper Grey Cloud - James Carpenter. In this season, we focused on building relationships with our spirit, land, and all of Creation, and skills that we can add to our bundle to live the good life. The season consisted of the following weekly themes:

Wisdom: Looking inwards towards our sacred spirit and who we are.

Love: Connecting with Our Good Mind, which focused on exploring mindfulness.

Respect: Making Ourselves Strong, which focused on exploring distress tolerance.

Honesty: Hearing my Heart's Sound, which focused on exploring emotional regulation.

Humility: Being a Good Relative, which focused on exploring relational effectiveness.

Bravery: Deciding my path with my bundle, which focused on exploring wise mind decision-making.

Truth: Deciding my path with my bundle, which focused on exploring wise mind decision-making.

Spirit: Deciding my path with my bundle, which focused on exploring wise mind decision-making.

For our last session, we closed the season off in a good way with a sweat lodge at Springwater Provincial Park in Barrie!



SEASON 8: NOURISHING OUR SPIRIT

Season 8 of BOB, Nourishing Our Spirit, was a hybrid model for Indigenous youth (14-29) to focus on mindfulness and engaging in mindfulness wholistically. Youth participants learned how to build mindfulness skills, relationships, and learned ways to thrive! This season consisted of the following weekly themes:

Fundamentals of Mindfulness: Learning the seven pillars of mindfulness in relation to the seven grandparent teachings.

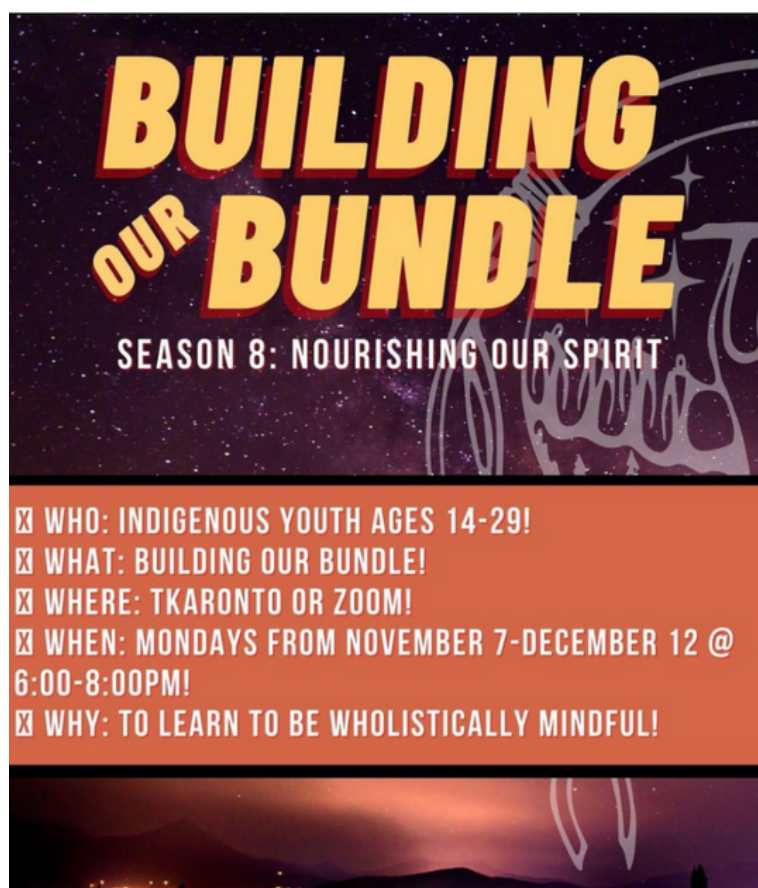
Mindfulness and the Body: Connecting with my physical self in a mindful way.

Mindfulness and Emotions: Connecting and understanding my emotional self in a mindful way.

Mindfulness and the Mind: Connecting with my mind and understanding my thoughts while being mindful.

Mindfulness and Spirit: Connecting and understanding what my spirit needs and wants in a mindful way.

Mindfulness Wholistically: Learning how to engage in mindfulness wholistcially and it be beneficial to my whole self.



BUILDING OUR BUNDLE

MOVING FORWARD

In 2023, the Building Our Bundle program has big expansion plans; the program has four more seasons planned for the new year. This new year will bring programs that are delivered both synchronously and asynchronously online to support the diverse needs of our population. The upcoming seasons will be hosted both in communities and opened nationwide to any young Indigeous people looking to learn, grow and connect with others.

Following the advice of our young people, we look forward to continuing offering Building Our Bundle sessions that reflect the needs and desires of our communities. In particular, we hope to offer both in-person and online iterations of the program in local and national contexts.

Session	Date	Method	Location
BOB Season 9	February-March 2023	Synchronous	Hybrid
BOB Season 10	May-June 2023	Synchronous	Hybrid
BOB Season 11	September-October 2023	Synchronous	Hybrid

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This mentorship program was inspired by the mentoring that was taking place between our BOB program coordinator and our Oskatis Nigaaniwe (youth leader) in various communities. Mentorship is a relational psychoeducation program that pairs mental health “mentors” with Indigenous youth in a one-on-one format. Typically mentors provide ongoing support on a weekly basis through 1-hour telephone or video sessions.

Mentorship was designed to support Indigenous youth who were looking for more individualized support with one of our mental health mentors. It is an opportunity for young people to connect with a mentor to learn and build new skills, work on goals or tasks, and have someone that they could regularly connect with. Our mentors come from a variety of backgrounds; child and youth care, social work, early childhood studies, traditional knowledge holders and more which created a diverse team to support diverse needs.

In addition to our standard Mental Health Mentorship, this year the Finding Our Power Together team developed and fostered many relationships with elders, knowledge keepers, healers and teachers to create a Cultural Mentorship service. This service provided young people with...

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Objectives	Activities to meet the objective	Outcome
Develop therapeutic and supportive relationships	<p>Mentors-mentees matched based on needs and identities</p> <p>Participants develop skills and practice relational effectiveness</p>	Participants develop long-standing relationships with caring adults and youth
Increase access to mental health support and interventions	<p>Participants meet regularly with a trained mental health worker to work on their self-determined wellness goals</p> <p>Participants can access various mental health supports</p>	Participants increase efficacy in their mental health care through increased access and exposure to mental health treatment modalities
Enhance understandings of mental health skills in real world contexts	Participants individualize mental health skills to their contexts	Participants develop new coping strategies, habits, and skills

After the end of the 2022 year, the Finding Our Power Together team supported approximately 19 Indigenous young people on a regular basis, this included one weekly session for approximately 12-weeks. Finding Our Power Together continued our mental health team that met bi-weekly to discuss mentorship, access supervision from Dr. Judy Finlay and other mental health professionals, debrief and plan for best practices. Our mental health team met approximately 25 times this year.

Mentorship Uptake in 2022		
Type of Mentorship	Number of Total Participants	Number of Total Sessions
Mental Health Mentorship	19	108
Cultural Mentorship	4	5

MOVING FORWARD

As FOPT continues to grow and more young people seek one-to-one support the more mentorship grows and develops. FOPT strives to support as many young people as possible, and to increase the number of young people accessing mentorship. Our plan is when young people register for Building Our Bundle sessions, they will automatically be paired with a mentor. This allows for us to streamline the process and to normalize individualized support. Young people will be paired with a mentor based on their interests, goals and type of support needed. For example a young person that is graduating high school, and looking for support around applying to post-secondary may be paired with a mentor that specialized in academic support.

In addition to streamlining the process of Mentorship, FOPT plans to gain support from elders, and traditional knowledge keepers. The purpose is for our Indigenous young people enrolled in mentorship to have access to cultural knowledge, ceremonies and teachings. We plan to have two Indigenous knowledge keepers on the Mentorship roster in 2023.

OSKATIS NIGAANIIWEMOWIN - THE WAY OF THE YOUNG LEADER

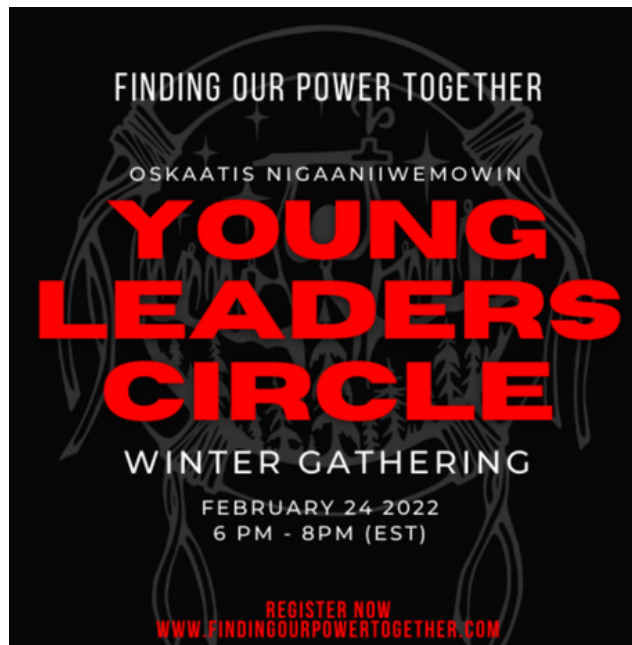
Oskatis Nigaaniiwemowin, which translates to “The Way of the Young Leader” is the Anishinaabemowin name for FOPT’s Young Leaders Circle (YLC). The Young Leaders Circle is a group of Indigenous young peoples between the ages 14-35 from across Turtle Island who share a common interest in supporting youth in their communities. Through reciprocal sharing and teaching, the YLC supports our young leaders to develop skills, explore challenges and celebrate successes in youth life promotion work as well as advising FOPT’s organizations decisions and program design. The Young Leaders Circle gathers seasonally and engages in networking, training and cultural teachings.

We feel the Young Leaders Circle was very successful in creating an accessible network for our young leaders that allows space for individual and spiritual growth, knowledge building, skill building and life promotion work.

Objectives	Activities to meet the objective	Outcome
To connect youth and youth serving adults across Canada	Participants gather seasonally to meet one another, share successes and challenges, and learn from one another how best to support Indigenous youth in their communities	Participants return to their local communities with increased social and professional networks, have a new outlook on possibilities for their work, and avoid burnout through ongoing emotional support
To support professional development opportunities to increase capacity in Indigenous communities	Participants engage in various trainings that enhance their capacity to offer support to youth	Participants gain tangible skills to support Indigenous youth and develop pathways to enhances educational and professional outcomes
To empower youth to guide the work of FOPT and other youth organizations	Participants advise on programs, trainings, and supports that FOPT offers as well as needs of their communities through dialogue and surveys	Participants gain a sense of agency in their lives and are invested in the work of FOPT. FOPT gains valuable insight on the experiences of Indigenous youth across Canada and how best to support them

WINTER GATHERING: LEADING WITH SPIRIT

Our Winter 2022 gathering in February created a space for young leaders to gather and learn the Teachings and Circles about Care in good spirit and meaningful dialogue. Our Young leaders heard from Nyle Johnston about the importance of Winter as a time for healing and restoration. Together, we spoke about how FOPT could better support young people through the pandemic. Young Leaders also participated in a workshop through Feather Carriers about the importance of Life Promotion through Storytelling.



Dates	Theme	Training Focus	Participants
February 24, 2022	Caring for ourselves and others	Teachings about ceremony Caring blanket Smudging while in blanket Braiding small piece of leather for healing Sunrise ceremony Birch bark on full moon, moon ceremony Cedar Baths Teaching songs	6

SPRING: PLANTING AND NOURISHING OUR SEEDS

Our Spring 2022 gathering in May brought together a group of passionate Indigenous youth leaders from across Turtle Island. The theme for YLC's Spring gathering was 'Planting and Nourishing our Seeds. During our time together, we reflected on accomplishments, what they may need support with, and setting our collective intentions. While sharing teachings and holding space for community we took the time to increase capacity for young leaders in organizational governance by way of using FOPT's governance model as an example. Our Young Leaders had the opportunity to complete a virtual Professional Development training which allowed them to add to their bundles in relation to life promotion.



Dates	Theme	Training Focus	Participants
May 26, 2022	Planting and Nourishing our Seeds	Planting Seeds: What are your intentions for yourself this season?	6

SUMMER 2022: YOUTH PROGRAM PLANNING TRAINING

The Young Leaders Circle summer gathering introduced the launch of FOPT's 'YLC Microgrant Program' built on last season's gathering where we facilitated a professional development and offered each young leader to fill out a micro grant proposal to submit. Once approved FOPT in partnership with the Laidlaw Foundation provided single and group grants to Young Leaders who are interested in designing and facilitating a workshop, small youth event or an online event. All recipients were matched with a mentor that supported each participant on their microgrant journey of program design and facilitation!



Dates	Theme	Training Focus	Participants
July 18, 2022	YLC Microgrant Program 2022	Youth Program Planning Guide for Indigenous Youth	10

MOVING FORWARD

The Young Leaders Circle will continue to hold seasonal gatherings to allow for Indigenous youth (14-35) who are helpers in their community to gain professional development, grow community relations, and continue providing feedback about our programs and operations. Our goal for the 2023 year is to provide more opportunities for youth to share their knowledge and experiences with us as well as other youth in the program.



MUSHKIKI AKI (LAND MEDICINE): CULTURAL LAND-BASED HEALING PROGRAMS

In 2022, Finding Our Power Together prioritized developing and facilitating land-based programs for Indigenous youth (14-29) to heal through connections with land. Land-based healing programs can be a crucial support to Indigenous young people, particularly those with high rates of mental illness and suicidality. Not only do land-based activities offer a venue for immersive learning, they also allow for meaningful engagement with traditional Indigenous healing practices, such as sweat lodges and fasting ceremonies. As many of our clients describe a disconnection from tradition and ceremony, Mushkiki Aki seeks to offer young people the opportunity to engage in traditional healing ceremonies, often for the first time. Further, our approach (a Braided Approach to mental health service provision) is unique in that it combines traditional Indigenous healing methodologies with mainstream mental health therapies through youth-centered activities, allowing for meaningful and long-term support in young peoples healing journeys. As Indigenous young people are often considered to be at high risk of suicide, trauma, and mental illness, programs centered on healing and psychoeducation from an Indigenous lens are crucial in mitigating poor mental health outcomes and preventable death by suicide.

These programs included full moon lodge, youth sweats, helping helpers camp, and land-based team training.



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MUSHKIKI AKI (LAND MEDICINE): CULTURAL LAND-BASED HEALING PROGRAMS

Name of Program	Date of Program	Number of Participants
Full Moon Lodge	June 11th, 2022 July 9th, 2022 August 13th, 2022 September 10th, 2022 November 12, 2022	5 6 15 6 13
Youth Sweats	July 29th, 2022 August 23rd 2022	9 13
Helping Helpers Camp	July 15th-19th, 2022	8 youth, 3 children
Land-Based Staff Training	June 3rd-5th, 2022	6 staff, 1 trainer

FULL MOON LODGE



These gathering were focus on the re-building of our community Moon Lodge, learning the teachings of each moon month, and participating together in ceremony. From an Anishinaabe perspective, the moon is connected to the feminine life-giving energies of the water and is a way we understand the cycles of menstruation. The full moon is a time for us to honour ourselves and pray for the future we want to bring into our lives. This lodge was a sacred space for women to engage in a traditional moon lodge, learn songs and teachings, and participate in a full moon sweat lodge. Men and other folks were welcome to come into this space if they were invited as support persons to attending women. In the space, men supported outside the lodge, learned fire keeping, and attended to the women who were on their moon time.

YOUTH SWEATS

These monthly summer sweat lodges were conducted by James Carpenter (Anishnaabe name Greycloud). The sweat lodge is a traditional Anishinaabe ceremony that fosters healing, purification, and connection to the spirit world. The ceremony allows us to pray, give thanks, and honour creation. Indigenous youth ages 14-29 were supported to learn about the sweat lodge ceremony, seasonal teachings, and songs. They participated in various activities as directed by the instructor. In addition they were offered opportunity to make offerings of tobacco, sing songs, and sweat in the lodge together.



HELPING HELPERS CAMP



Helpers camp was for Indigenous young people 18-29 years of age from July 15 - July 19 in Cape Croker Park. This camp was an opportunity for helpers; those that take on roles of supporting the well-being of community members along with reconnect with land and themselves to heal! During this 5-day camping retreat, participants were engaged in land-based activities, spending time with knowledge keepers to participate in ceremonies and learn teachings and, develop tools and skills to better support their capacity to be young leaders and helpers in their communities. This experience provided young people the opportunity to learn, share, connect with others.

LAND-BASED STAFF TRAINING

The purpose of this land-based staff training was to build connections within the team and plan for summer programming. Our team spent 3 days planning for summer programs, practicing facilitation and activities, connecting with land, and participating in preparations for ceremony.





TELLING OUR STORIES TOGETHER

In 2022, Finding Our Power Together and Bawaadan Collective have been collaborating on a short film, Telling Our Stories Together, which involves storytelling the relationship between Indigenous youth and Indigenous Elders in Tkaronto. The project has connected mentors from Finding Our Power Together and Bawaadan Collective to design and create an inter-generational knowledge exchange through film! As a youth-driven project, Indigenous youth have been going on a film-intensive making journey to learn the core concepts of filmmaking while driving the project forward. Through all of their amazing film ideas, we have collectively agreed upon an idea that we are so excited to share with you in its completion in 2023!

Name of Program	Date of Program	Number of Participants
Design and create an intergenerational knowledge exchange through film	Intensive film professional developments, workshops on filmmaking, planning, writing, interviewing, acting, and editing	Participants gained knowledge first hand from their Indigenous kin on what film is
Learn skills in Indigenous storytelling	Using personal storytelling to co-create a film through collective storytelling methodologies to created a collaborative film idea detailing their relations with Elders, family, and community	Participants practiced and honoured their inherent storytelling skills
Build relationships	Working in a collaborative community-based model throughout the entirety of the film project through ongoing team consultations and sharing circles	Participants were able to come together as a community and foster intergenerational connections with an Elder and with one another

SESSION OVERVIEW

Date	Theme	Training Focus	Participants
September 17, 2022	Film intensive professional development workshop	Learning the basics of filmmaking: cinematography, writing, interviewing skills, special FX	5
October 2, 2022	Practicing working with film equipment and co-creating a film idea and drafted script	Learning about technical shots, lighting, and sound, as well as protocols on privacy and confidentiality	5
January 10, 2023 - January 26, 2023	Polished script reading and final edits, asset mapping, assigning and planning actors	<p>Learning how to format a script and engage in a script reading and editing process</p> <p>Learning preparatory phases of filming such as asset mapping, planning locations, allocation of casting</p>	4
January 28, 2023 - April 1, 2023	Intensive short film full day of filming, with all youth actors, film crew, and actor Kevin Allan Hess	<p>Youth actors learned about line delivery, acting, and how to strategically deliver lines within segmented frames</p> <p>Youth filming crew learned to plan shots, and handle camera, light, and sound equipment in various settings</p> <p>Youth interested in editing supported with the post production editing process of the raw footage to produce the final short film</p>	4

MOVING FORWARD

FINDING OUR POWER TOGETHER PRESENTS

AN INDIGENOUS FILM MAKING INTENSIVE:

TELLING OUR STORIES TOGETHER



SEPTEMBER 2022

WHERE: TKARONTO!

WHEN: SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 2022!

WHO: INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN TKARONTO 14-29!

WHY: BRING INDIGENOUS YOUTH & ELDERS TOGETHER!

WHAT: FILM MAKING WITH INDIGENOUS YOUTH & ELDERS!

BAWAADAN COLLECTIVE X FINDING OUR POWER TOGETHER

FINDINGOURPOWERTOGETHER.CAMPBRAINREGISTRATION.COM

Following the advice of our team and our young people, we look forward to continuing this film intensive with Bawaadan Collective and Indigenous Youth into the new year. We wanted to be intentional in reflecting the needs and desires of all the youth on this journey and accommodating everyone's time, efforts and gifts. In particular, we were allotted an extension on the grant and the subsequent Telling Our Stories Together partnership with the intention of generating the participants' ideas and being able to carry through on the working pieces and action items. Upon completion we hope to host a viewing party for the youth to see the final piece and the gifts they all shared.

UPCOMING TELLING OUR STORIES TOGETHER SESSIONS

Script Polishing: January 10, 2023

Script Read Through: January 26, 2023

Production Session: January 28, 2023

Post Production: February 1 - April 1, 2023

Dissemination and Share Back: May 2023



ORANGE HEART CLUB

Orange Heart Club is an after school program for elementary school students (Grades 1-6) to develop meaningful relationships, practices, and understandings of the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The program helps Indigenous and non-Indigenous children learn about Indigenous experiences and perspectives of colonialism through play, stories, and interactive experiences. The Orange Heart is a symbol of truth and reconciliation, through which the next Seven Generations of Canadians can enter into more meaningful, honest, and inclusive relationships with Indigenous peoples and lands. This term, the focus was on reconciliation, the history of residential schools, treaties, land acknowledgement and more.

Dates	Theme	Focus	Participants
October to December 2022	Reconciliation	To develop meaningful relationships, practices, and understandings of the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada.	3

WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

YOUTH PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE

The Youth Program Planning workshop was designed by Finding Our Power Together to support Indigenous youth to design, plan, and facilitate youth programs that are meaningful and appropriate for their communities. Employing the principles of youth-centred and value-driven design frameworks, this workshop supported youth through a step-by-step process to develop a program idea into reality.

Many of our youth participants are helpers and leaders in their communities and we wanted to give them the support and tools to help them with planning, developing, facilitating, and analyzing their programs. We are currently working on adapting the youth program planning training into a published resource equipt with worksheets and other external resources to walk youth through the process of creating and maintaining their own program.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE "S" WORD

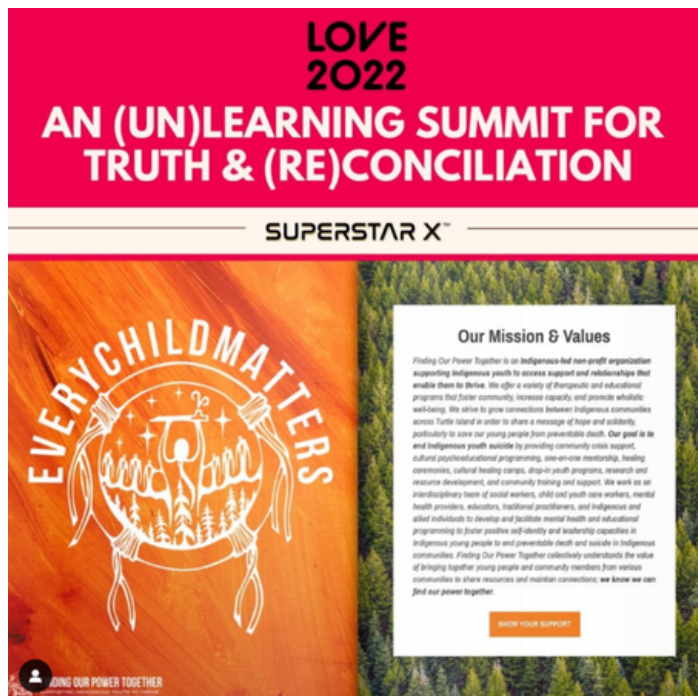
The Let's Talk About the "S" Word training created by Finding Our Power Together was hosted to help those working and living with Indigenous youth to better understand the "S" word (the word that we are often afraid of saying out loud: suicide), support youth in their lives, and facilitate therapeutic conversations with young people. This training offered research-based strategies on engaging in discussions about preventable death by suicide, grief and loss, and mental health challenges.

This training was developed through ongoing relationships and therapeutic practice with Indigenous youth and communities, as well as systematic examination of current data on Indigenous youth suicide. This project synthesizes information gathered by graduate level research assistants with expertise in social work, mental health therapies, and experience working with Indigenous young people. The strategies offered in this toolkit have been developed to emulate the types of supports the Finding Our Power Together mental health team offers its clients, informed by our mental health strategy called Wiingushk Okaadinige, which is Anishinaabemowin for "Sweetgrass Braid."

WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

ALL MY RELATIONS: HOW TO NAVIGATE RECONCILIATION

On December 9, two team members from Finding Our Power Together facilitate a workshop for Superstar X magazine called *All My Relations: How to Navigate ReconciliACTION*. Kaitlyn and Nan shared their perspectives on ReconciliACTION, including statistics of colonialism, settler responsibility, and how to enter reconciliative relationships in a culturally safe way.



CAMPAIGNS

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Throughout the year we had various social media campaigns to raise awareness and educate our community about events, days of commemoration, and how to stand in solidarity. We had various social media campaigns including, but not limited to, Pink Shirt Day, Black History Month, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit, Pride Month, Indigenous Disability Month, and Trans Awareness month.



THRIVING THURSDAYS

Thriving Thursdays is a social media campaign that FOPT started in 2020 to feature Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, collectives, and individuals to showcase how they thrive or how they help Indigenous youth to thrive. Since 2020, we have featured over 100 individuals and/or organizations on our social media platforms!



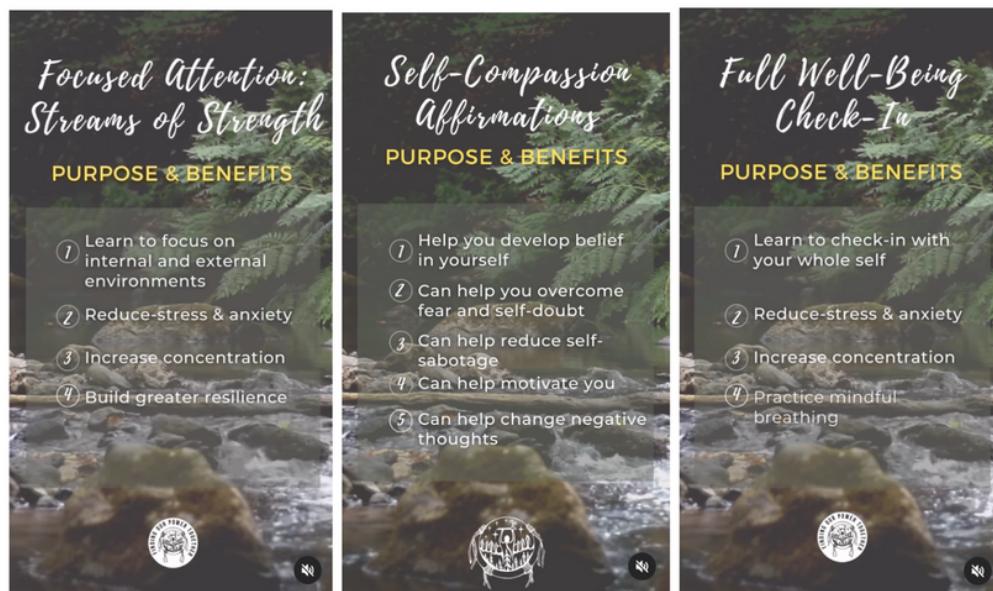
MINDFUL MARCH

Mindful March is a campaign that includes a 30-day challenge that encourages you to practice 60 seconds of mindfulness in your everyday life. During this challenge, the Finding Our Power Together team uploaded weekly videos on social media that included mindfulness prompts and activities along with a tracking card that helps to motivate and keep track of practicing mindfulness!



MINDFUL MONDAYS

Mindful Mondays is a weekly social media campaign that encourages you to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life. Each week presents a different mindfulness skills to add to your bundle!



FEATURE FRIDAYS

Feature Fridays is a social media campaign that FOPT was launched in 2021 and continues to showcase various amazing educational resources and apps with our community through our social media platforms in an accessible way!



ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Orange Shirt Day is a campaign we run every year in support of National Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30. Our campaign runs the length of September to raise money for suicide prevention programs and Indian Residential School Survivors Society through selling orange shirts. This year we fundraised over \$2000 in shirts to support our indigenous youth through suicide prevention and life promotion programs.



WINTER DONATION DRIVE

In 2022, Finding Our Power Together held it's second annual winter donation drive to gathering supplies for Indigenous communities. We collected an abundance of clothing items, winter gear, non-perishable food items, books, toys, and monetary donations. A special shout out to City Street Outreach for their generous donation of new winter hats, scarfs, jackets, boots, and sweaters. These donations will greatly benefit Indigenous communities in Tkaronto and beyond. We are so grateful to everyone who donated and showed their support, whether it was through item donations, monetary donations, or shopping from our store. Every little bit counts!



FURNISHING OUR OFFICE

In the summer of 2022, FOPT got our first ever office space at 664 Bloor St W! This fundraising campaign was to support with furnishing our office space to make it comfortable and welcoming for our youth. We raised over \$1000 and received many wonderful furniture donations from Rogers!



RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

In 2022, Finding Our Power Together continued to work on our research and resources to support Indigenous youth and communities. We published our first interactive journal for Indigenous youth to purchase and use to enhance their wellness and mental health journeys. We have many research and resource projects in the works that we are very excited to share with you next year!

FIND YOUR POWER: 100 DAYS OF SELF DISCOVERY - A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Introducing Find Your Power: 100 Days of Self Discovery! Your greatest power lies already within you; it's just a matter of you discovering it! This resource is full of reflective prompts designed to encourage mindfulness and self-reflection as a way to discover your inner power. These prompts will allow you to challenge yourself and your way of thinking and support you in getting to know yourself better. Inside you will find over 100 prompts for self-discovery that explore each aspect of the medicine wheel. Discover who you really are and decide who you want to be!

We published this book on Amazon and it is available for purchase by anyone. All proceeds from the sales of this book go directly to suicide prevention and life promotion programs for Indigenous youth across Canada.



FOPT ACKNOWLEDGES

2022 FUNDERS

Rod and Betty Wade
Endowment Fund
Canadian Roots
Exchange
Lululemon
Laidlaw Foundation
Toronto Foundation
Employment and
Social Development
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2022 PARTNERS

Bawaadan Collective
Toronto Metropolitan
University
University of Toronto
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Mary Elizabeth Luka
Mayuko Mikami
Meagan Johnston
Melanie Dumais
Mini Moche Retail
Nanami Nogami
Nicole Naraine
Percy White
Rebecca Lyon

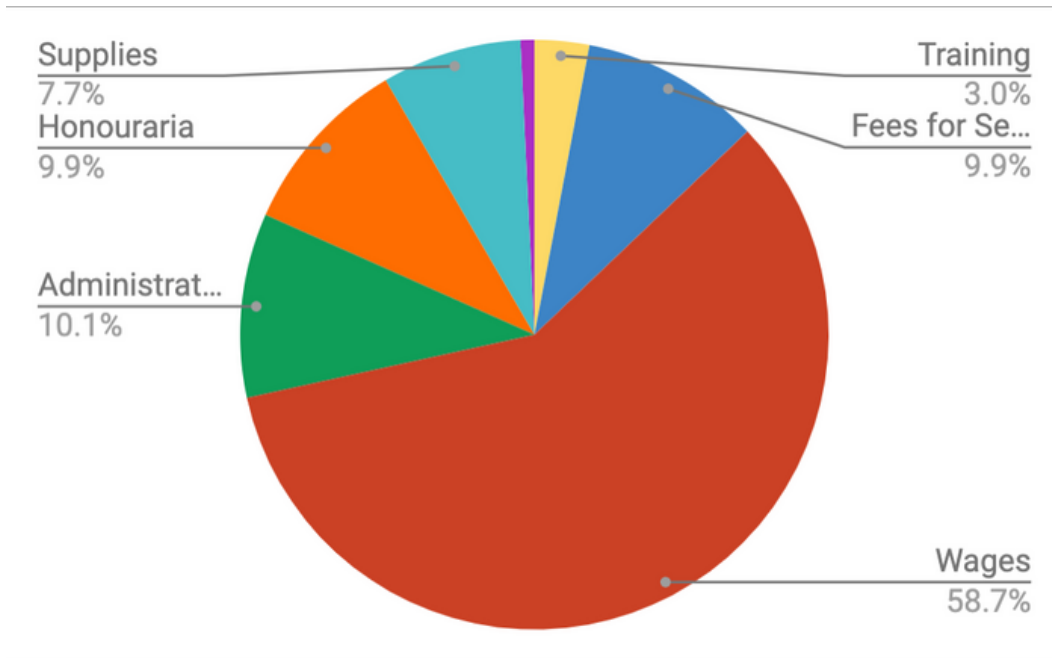
Rehema Roadknight
Rose Goulais
Sharon Jones
Stefanie De Rossi
Supriya Khosla
Susan Hache
Tayco Panelink LTD
Toronto Foundation
Toronto Foundation
Wesley Magee-Saxton
William Croson
Zoe Stoller

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION			
CATEGORIES	EXPENSES	INCOME	TOTALS
Training	8017.90	1965	-6052.90
Fees for Service	26,349.76	2318.72	-24,031.904
Wages	156,407.15	0	-156,407.15
Administrative	26,926.53	0	-26,926.53
Honouraria	26,400	2500	-23,900
Supplies	20,472.40	0	-20,472.40
Store	2019.19	15,721.57	13,702.38
Grant	0	231,713.38	231,713.38
Private Donations	0	40,676.24	40,676.24
TOTALS	266,592.93	294,894.91	28,301.98

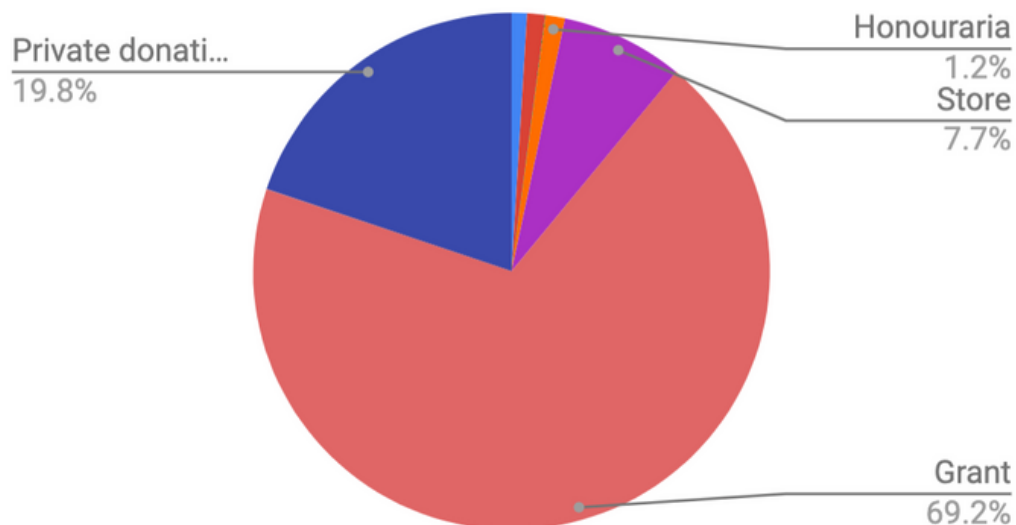
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

EXPENSES



INCOME

Income vs. Categories



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

As we close another transformative year at Finding Our Power Together, we acknowledge the challenges we faced, and the adaptations we made in response to the ever-evolving landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resilience and tenacity shown by our team, community, and especially our youth, has reinforced our commitment to empowering Indigenous communities across Canada, and in particular Nibinamik.

Looking forward to 2023, we have ambitious goals to further enrich the lives of our Indigenous youth and strengthen our community.

One of our primary objectives is to formalize mental health services for Indigenous youth, supported by trained youth mental health workers and Indigenous traditional practitioners. This step is crucial in addressing the urgent mental health needs within our community.

We also intend to solicit donations for our partner communities, continuing to expand our network and fostering deeper, meaningful connections. This will complement our ongoing training for youth on various topics, including Mental Health First Aid, which we believe is essential in promoting mental well-being.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

We are eager to develop additional mental health and land-based programming, providing diverse, holistic methods for healing and growth. Building upon our Building Our Bundle program, we aim to host additional synchronous virtual sessions focusing on body awareness and developing Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) skills.

In terms of organizational growth, we will be formalizing our governance structure. This will allow us to function more efficiently and effectively as we continue to expand.

Ultimately, we aim to maintain and increase sustainable funding sources. This will ensure that we can continue to offer our vital services and support our communities in the most effective way possible.

While these are ambitious goals, we believe in the strength and resilience of our communities and the power of working together. With your continued support, we are confident that we can turn these goals into realities, and in doing so, continue to uplift the lives of Indigenous youth across Canada. Miigwetch

**OUR ROLE AS HELPERS TO INDIGENOUS YOUTH IS TO GUIDE THEM
ALONG THEIR OWN PATH, SO THEY CAN HOLD HOPE AND DESIRE FOR
THE FUTURE.**



FINDING OUR POWER TOGETHER

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