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Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.  
"those who lead"

# Annual Report

## 2022-23



Sākihiwēwin – leading with love

[kanikanichihk.ca](http://kanikanichihk.ca)



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## Sākihiwēwin– leading with love

Sākihiwēwin is a Cree understanding that embodies the sacred concept of interconnectedness and balance, emphasizing the spiritual harmony between all living beings and the natural world. It reflects our ancestral wisdom, guiding us to respect and protect the Earth, nurture our cultural heritage, and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

The theme for this year's Annual Report is Sākihiwēwin– leading with love, to find our place in the circle. Since coming into being in 2001, Ka Ni Kanichihk has worked to embody the ethic of Sākihiwēwin. We've stood alongside the many Indigenous leaders, healers, and thinkers who have actively contributed to advancing the health and wellbeing of urban Indigenous families.

As part of a strong, interconnected community, Ka Ni Kanichihk is committed to leading our people toward balance and health through the reclamation of our traditions and culturally responsive adaptations of trauma-informed care. Ka Ni Kanichihk has walked beside thousands of Indigenous relatives living in Winnipeg as they transformed their lives. The impacts of their strengths ripple out to thousands more Indigenous peoples and families living both in Winnipeg and in rural, Metis and First Nations communities across Manitoba.

We thank the sister organizations, partners, donors and funders who have also chosen to walk alongside Indigenous peoples every day.

Your support ensures Ka Ni Kanichihk is agile and fiscally sustainable so that more people can access supports every year.

## Programs and their Community Impact

Ka Ni Kanichihk programming falls into four categories:

### 1 Healing and Wellness Programs

Individuals and families come to heal, grow, and reconnect with their cultures, languages and traditions through learning and healing programs that are nurturing spaces steeped in ancestral knowledges.

### 2 Youth Mentorships and Risk Prevention

Youth are paired with mentors and can access wrap-around supports that cultivate their pride and connection to community. These programs nurture them to become the torchbearers of our cultural heritage.

### 3 Education, Employment & Training and Community Support

Each and every family deserves the opportunity to cultivate joy, love and holistic wellbeing. Families can take part in programs ranging from education and training, to life-skills development, to culturally enriched childcare, to food and housing support, to violence prevention. Each program fosters the development of family strength.

### 4 Community Reconciliation

Ka Ni Kanichihk trains community organizations and businesses to actively move toward a future where everyone's experience is respected, healing is centered and equity is upheld to move reconciliation forward.

## Ka Ni Kanichihk Programs

### Butterfly Club

Builds positive coping and leadership skills and peer support for girls and Two-Spirit youth aged 9-13 years.

### Heart Medicine Lodge

Offers culturally based support for women who have experienced violence.

### Honouring Gifts

Helps single mothers build employment skills.

### Mushkowzee Ikwe Strong Woman's Empowerment Project

Mentors youth and young women who are involved in youth street gangs or are justice connected to support them in making lifestyle choices.

### Restoring the Sacred

Is a peer mentorship program for youth who come to Winnipeg from their home communities to continue their secondary education.

### Medicine Bear Counselling

Builds on the strengths and resilience of families impacted by the tragic loss of missing and murdered loved ones.

### Community Economic Development

Is a partnership with Red River College to provide an educational and work experience certified program to prepare women for community development careers.

### Mino Pimatisiwin STBBI Care Model

Is a community-based, culturally safe model of care for people with sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections to increase treatment participation rates.

### Kistesimaw, My Eldest Brother

Is a mentorship program for boys aged 8-12 years in danger of becoming in conflict with the law.

### Velma's House

Is a 24/7 safe space for women and 2SLGBTQ+ community members identifying as female. It serves as a place of safety, comfort and connection for those experiencing homelessness, violence or exploitation.

### Manitoba Youth Transitional Employment Assistance and Mentorship, MYTEAM

Offers youth leaving the care of Child & Family Services one-to-one support, mentorship and guidance as they work toward independence.

### UMatter Stop Youth Dating Violence Project

Integrates dating-violence-prevention curricula into all Ka Ni Kanichihk programming.

### Huddle Ka Ni Kanichihk

Provides wrap-around supports for youth aged 12-29. It offers peer support, drop-in and cultural programming, navigation of systems, primary care, harm reduction and referrals to mental health supports.

### White Wolf Speaking

Provides sexual and reproductive health education, community supports and distribution of safer sex and harm reduction supplies.

### Waniska Centre

Provides Indigenous research on HIV/HCV/STBBI and provides peer support for women living with HIV.

### Medicine Children's Lodge

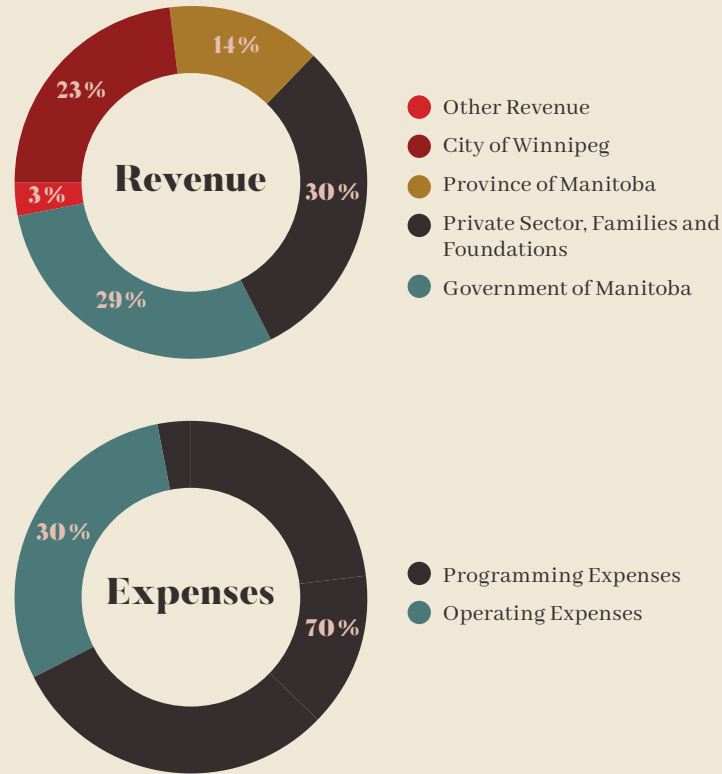
Is a licensed day care centre for children of those taking part in educational programs.

For more information, please visit [kanikanichihk.ca/programs/](https://kanikanichihk.ca/programs/)

## Financial Responsibility and Community Governance

In 2022-2023 we celebrate in reaching our fundraising goal for the Capital Expansion project that will see an increase from 8,700 to 22,000 square feet and include an expanded daycare, cultural and community space, a commercial kitchen, a clinic space and training rooms.

Ka Ni Kanichihk also acquired a building to deliver the supports and services offered through Velma's House, a critical support focused on the prevention of Gender Based Violence.



# 2022-23



## Message from Executive Director

### 2022-2023 Highlights

There is a story behind every statistic, and your support makes you an important part of the stories created at Ka Ni Kanichihk.

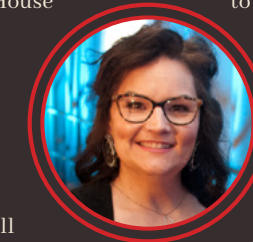
This has been a tough year as the community continues to heal from the pandemic.

While the circumstances that necessitated a new location for Velma's House were tragic, we are glad that this year the 24-7 safe space was able to reopen in a larger and more appropriate location. Thank you to the Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg as well as many people and families who are making sure women and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community have a place to feel welcomed and supported. Velma's House saw more than 12,000 visits this year.

Velma's House was one of two capital projects moving forward this year. The other is Sākihiwēwin Lodge, an expansion of the Ka Ni Kanichihk campus at 455 McDermot Avenue to create new opportunities for people to heal, learn and train, all centred in culture. All the money has been raised for the completion of this new two-storey building that will be filled with new spaces for community, and construction has begun. Thank you to the people, families, businesses and governments who have contributed. We look forward to sharing progress with you and welcoming you when the building opens in 2024.

With the community behind them, countless relatives have reconnected with their cultural identities, overcome personal challenges, and emerged as community leaders. Families have been reunited, and communities have grown stronger. This is something to celebrate!

The Sexual Wellness Lodge also opened in 2022, providing health and healing services to Indigenous people needing to access testing and health professionals around sexual health, including HIV.



Ka Ni Kanichihk has also implemented a new Gender Based Violence prevention project that will include partnerships and training throughout Manitoba.

As we look ahead, we do so with immense determination and full hearts. As people who support Ka Ni Kanichihk, use Ka Ni Kanichihk, and love Ka Ni Kanichihk, we invite you to continue this transformative journey with community.

In the year ahead, you will see Sākihiwēwin Lodge take shape with a cultural and community gathering space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can come together to learn and grow. You will see an outdoor community gathering space that will allow the community to gather, rest, reflect, and have a place of belonging.

You will continue to see a thriving community, working, growing and learning together.

Together, we will build a future where Indigenous knowledge, cultural pride and reconciliation thrive, where individuals and families find healing and resilience, and where our community and nation flourish in unity.

Ekosani/Miigwetch/Maarsii,

**Dodie Jordaan**

Executive Director

## Message from Council Co-Chairs

**Tansi!** With the utmost gratitude and deep humility we stand before you in the spirit of unity and kinship. As we navigate the ever-evolving currents of time, we acknowledge the gifts and challenges that have shaped the journey of our organization over the past year.

Our mission, as set forth by our ancestors and guided by the wisdom of Indigenous knowledge, remains unwavering: to lead our people towards health, balance, and empowerment through culturally rooted learning and healing programs. As we reflect upon the year that has passed and look forward to the path that lies ahead, we are reminded of the profound importance of our work within our community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our participants, our dedicated staff and volunteers, and our entire community for their continued support. Together, we move forward, hand in hand, towards a future where Indigenous knowledges, healing, and empowerment shine brightly.

Kinanaskomitinawaw!

With respect and gratitude,

**Sydney Levasseur Puhach & Ken Sanderson**

Co-Chairs

We are committed to being good relatives for our kin and good ancestors for those yet to come. Collectively, we continue to move forward in strength to pursue thriving for all our relations.

Sydney Levasseur Puhach

We are so honoured and excited to be part of this journey as we see the next generation rising up in strength. The power in helping people reconnect with Indigenous ways of being is so clearly demonstrated in the outcomes we are seeing.

Ken Sanderson

## Celebrating Our Relatives

### Jasmine's Story

I wanted to take a moment to express my profound gratitude for the transformative experience I had as a participant in the Huddle program. My journey with Ka Ni Kanichihk's Huddle program has left an indelible mark on my life, and I wanted to share my thoughts and feelings with you.

Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the staff at Huddle for providing such a welcoming environment and for giving me the space to grow as an Indigenous artist.

My name is Jasmine Yuzicapi, and I hail from Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation, SK. My involvement with Ka Ni Kanichihk began as a participant in their Heart Medicine Lodge program, and later, I found my way into their Huddle program in 2018. The Huddle staff were truly amazing. They were hands-on and relatable, which made me feel safe – a feeling I wasn't accustomed to before joining this program. Huddle Ka Ni Kanichihk helped me gain the confidence to put myself out there, to practice and share my gifts with others.

I carry the weight of intergenerational trauma, as both my parents were Residential School survivors. Through my creative journey, I found the strength to overcome this trauma and lead a sober life. I've been able to help others navigate their own traumas through creativity.

By attending the drop-in center and participating in their recreational programming, Huddle gave me the opportunity to facilitate my own workshops. This allowed me to gain momentum with my business, largely through word of mouth within the Ka Ni Kanichihk community, which now sustains me and has enabled me to transition off Employment and Income Assistance (EIA). This achievement was something I never thought possible, especially as an Indigenous person.



Through my work, I've had the privilege of meeting many individuals in the community who were still in the process of learning about their culture. Witnessing their journey of self-discovery and reclamation of their Indigenous identity is why I continue to facilitate workshops. I'm constantly amazed by those who come in, often claiming it's their first time using a sewing machine or expressing their creativity, and then proceed to impress me with their talents.

I truly don't know where I would be without Ka Ni Kanichihk's programs and the incredible support of its staff. They have provided me with the space and resources to attend important ceremonies and have offered unwavering support and guidance through the challenges I faced last year.

I hope to continue sharing my gifts with the community while also participating in your invaluable programs. I eagerly anticipate the future and look forward to witnessing the growth and impact of your organization, especially with its new expansion. Thank you, Huddle and Ka Ni Kanichihk, for the countless opportunities and unwavering support.

Once again, thank you for this incredible journey with Ka Ni Kanichihk. The Huddle program has been a catalyst for positive change in my life, and I am deeply thankful for the opportunities it has provided. I look forward to staying connected and supporting your important work in any way I can.

### Melanie's Story

My name is Melanie Hart, and my spirit name is East Wind Medicine Woman. I am a widowed mother of four and a grandmother.

I want to express my profound gratitude for the journey and experiences I had as a participant in the Information and Office Administrative program. My journey with it has left an incredible mark on my life, and I wanted to share my thoughts and feelings with you.

I graduated from Ka Ni Kanichihk's Information and Office Administrative Program around 2016. I went on to my second year at Red River College. Since graduating, I became an Administrative Assistant and then I became a Systems Navigator in the same program.

I have worked in various positions in the community, from advocating for families to keep their children from apprehension to working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. I've always held this cause close to my heart, aiming to help break my own generational trauma and assist others in doing the same.

By being part of this organization, I have had the opportunity to attend various trainings. In one particular training, I crossed paths with an Elder. After connecting with her, she shared that her grandmother was one of the original kookoms who actually helped name Ka Ni Kanichihk. Since making that connection, she offered to involve our participants by conducting a Lodge raising teaching. Our team was able

to accompany her to perform a Land Blessing Ceremony to kick off the start of a new community project.

I am excited to see my own children grow through Ka Ni Kanichihk as well.

Thank you once again for the incredible journey.

## Governing Council

Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. is governed by a volunteer Council who bring an array of skills, education, experiences, and knowledge to the urban Indigenous community in Winnipeg.

The Council oversees and guides the activities of the organization. Our Co-Chairs provide leadership and engage with organizational activities and events. The Council learns and grow together as a family, sharing their love and care for Ka Ni Kanichihk and the community.

# Council

### Executive Members

Jessie Howell	Elder
Sydney Levesseur-Puhach	Co-Chair
Ken Sanderson	Co-Chair
Carter Wilson	Treasurer
Herb Zobell	Secretary

### Management and Operations

Dodie Jordaan	Executive Director
Dana Connolly	Associate Executive Director
Ieesha Sankar	Director of Programs and Services
Samantha Harris	Director of Healing Programs
Asif Siddiqui	Finance Director
Sheila Chua	Program Accountant
Ivy Camaclang	Finance Clerk
Zen Ihsan	Human Resource Specialist
Janel Lavallee	Executive Assistant
Christine Harper	Office Administrative Assistant
Shawn Webster	Network Administrator
Cathy Menard	Fundraising and Campaign Coordinator

### Regular Members

Audrey Richard  
 Nike Bello  
 Eman Agpalza  
 Danielle Carriere  
 Brett Huson  
 Jeremy McKay



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