

LOOKING UP TO GUIDE OUR PATH

JENNIFER FRAIN

FINDING OUR WAY FORWARD THROUGH OUR COMMITMENT TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Work at New Directions has never been busier. We continue to grow at a fast pace, expanding our services to new areas of the province and rising up to the challenge and becoming what our community needs of us. In the midst of developing programs, crunching numbers and hiring all the wonderful people that will help us deliver our services, we cannot lose sight of our mission, our values and our commitments.

As part of New Directions' pledge to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we are constantly re-evaluating our practices, services, operations and priorities to ensure we are being true to the Indigenous peoples that have inhabited the land we call home since time immemorial.

This introspection leads us to this publication, which was launched over 25 years ago as the Compass, a way to share with our community what was going on at New Directions.

Over the years, it has been pointed out to us that the compass, although a very good name given its easy

connection to "New Directions", is a symbol that is widely attributed to the Age of Discovery. A period in our history notorious for exploration, colonization, and slavery.

Our organization has grown and matured in so many ways in 25 years. Moving forward, we have decided to rename the Compass.

After long discussions, we have settled on the North Star. Known as Polaris, the star has been used by peoples from all over the world to guide their path, including the Indigenous peoples of Canada. In Ojibwe, it's called Giiwedjin-anang, which means "Returning Home Star".

We hope it always helps us find our way home and remain true and close to our community.

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THE NORTHSTAR

YOUR GUIDE
TO WHAT'S
HAPPENING AT
NEW DIRECTIONS

SPRING
2023

REBUILDING AFTER THE FIRE

NEW DIRECTIONS MOVES BACK TO 717 PORTAGE AVE AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF RESTORATION.

As the end of 2021 was approaching, the team at New Directions was busy planning a long-awaited return to the office. It had been a two-year period of pandemic restrictions. Staff and the individuals we support were eager to return. And then the unthinkable happened: a fire!

Planning suddenly came to a halt on the morning of January 3, 2022. A fire broke out on the first floor of the building. It incinerated most of the ground level. The smoke damaged the entire building, and we couldn't access

it for many months. Combined with COVID, it severely impacted the people we support.

The area most impacted by the fire was the Indigenous cultural program, Opikihiwawin. It means "coming home" in Anishinew. For over 40 years Opikihiwawin has offered thousands of Indigenous adoptees, children and youth in foster care a path to reconnect with their culture and biological families.

The fire destroyed priceless, one-of-a-kind Indigenous items such as regalia,



Winnipeg fire crews worked tirelessly to extinguish the fire that happened at the New Directions building on Portage Avenue.

drums and star blankets. "The children and youth were particularly sad to lose the drums," said Darlene Daniels, Director of Culture, Education and Training Services. Drums are considered living entities by Indigenous peoples.

The people we support are anxious to get back to normal programming—especially the Kookums/grandmothers! Once back, they'll be busy in the restored kitchen making delicious meals like stews and bannock.

Just this past February we resumed some Opikihiwawin programming in our newly renovated space. We expect it will be fully operational by late spring. In the meantime, we are awaiting shipments of filmmaking equipment, sewing machines, fabrics, etc.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION MURALS

Also housed on the first floor of the building were a series of murals that were painted to celebrate the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The grand pieces of artwork were created by Indigenous artists and participants from various service areas, including Opikihiwawin, Training Resources for Youth (TRY), and Resources for Adolescent Parents (RAP). The murals were meant to offer vivid depictions of Indigenous culture and were based on

the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The results of these collaborations were quite spectacular, and the murals became a source of great pride for New Directions and our community. Students who had initially claimed that they couldn't draw were now showing off their work on the walls. The reaction to the murals was overwhelmingly positive.

Although many items were lost in the fire, the team was thrilled to know that the main floor murals could be restored. They are now back at 717 welcoming everyone that walks through our doors every day.

PROGRAMS - NEW AND RENEWED!

Thanks to our donors, participants are enjoying "Beading is Healing Circles" and language and tutoring classes.

And the sewing room will soon be humming again. Youth and adults will recreate traditional regalia that they lost in the fire.

Drum Making Teachings are starting ahead of schedule, in May. In this workshop children, youth and their families will learn the ancient art of Indigenous drum making. They'll also learn to sing Indigenous songs.



Traditional Indigenous regalia will be recreated at the Opikiwawin program, to be worn with pride at Ceremonies and Pow Wows.



"Seven Teachings", a mural painted by lead artist Peatr Thomas and participants from New Directions' Work 2 It program, is now restored and back to its original home at 717 Portage.



Before (top) and after (bottom) extensive renovations undertaken in the Opikiwawin program.

REMEMBERING IS HONOURING

TREVOR DONER | PHOTOS BY TIFFANY SCHAMBACH

NEW DIRECTIONS HOSTS ITS SECOND NATIONAL TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DAY EVENT.

On Thursday, September 29th, the sun shone down again as more than 300 people joined together at 717 Portage Avenue to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day – also known as Orange Shirt Day – honours residential school survivors through the story of Phyllis Webstad whose new orange shirt, a gift from her grandmother, was taken away on her first day at residential school.

For the past two years, New Directions has observed September 30th, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, as a statutory holiday.

This action respects the need for all community members to honour and remember the children who died and the continued impacts of the genocidal policy of residential schools. As our offices are closed on Sept 30, New Directions has chosen to host an event the day before the official day. Building upon the success of last year’s inaugural event, 2022’s observance aimed for a balance of reflection and celebration.

Volunteers stepped forward from all over the organization and the community to help stage the event



An event participant places an orange handprint on one of our 717 Portage windows.



Cree activist and writer Clayton Thomas-Müller opened the event with a prayer.

and support all the activities. There were T-shirt sales to benefit The National Indigenous Residential School Museum, and a craft table for folks to decorate their own personalized orange t-shirt. Another crew of volunteers worked to help reapply the orange handprints on the main floor windows.

Passersby were drawn to stop and ask what was happening and then gladly added their handprints to the collage. Owing to the restoration of 717 Portage, organizers had to make a few adjustments to carry the event off as planned. Atheena Martinez of Beshiestakoyumms Kitchen provided us with the space we needed to put together the feast. Students from Training Opportunities for Youth, along with Darlene Daniels, helped Carol Thomas prepare the stew and bannock that folks raved about, and yet more volunteers helped to serve the line of people eagerly awaiting their turn.

The Immigrant Support Group put together an interactive activity with information inspired by Call to Action #93 and the Pride Committee provided dessert and invited folks from the 2Spirits Building from Within Project to also set up an information table.

The focal point of the event however was the incredible lineup of speakers and entertainers that we were honoured came to share their talents. Dan Highway spoke movingly about his experience in residential school and Clayton Thomas Muller shared a powerful letter he had written symbolically to his father, a Survivor. Joyce Delaronde was back this year as our fabulous emcee as well as Ryan Richard who dazzled the crowd with his jigging. We were so fortunate that rising comedy star Paul Rabliauskas, stopped by to bring some much-needed laughter to the day. CJ the Grey and Jane Fuentez rounded out the lineup and wowed the crowd with their talents. We are grateful for being able to celebrate the Day once again and are looking forward to our 2023 event.



Emcee Joyce Delaronde, New Directions' Darlene Daniels and comedian Paul Rabliauskas.



Orange t-shirts painted and decorated by participants. T-shirts sold at the event had their proceeds donated to The National Indigenous Residential School Museum.

FOSTERING DREAMS BIG AND SMALL

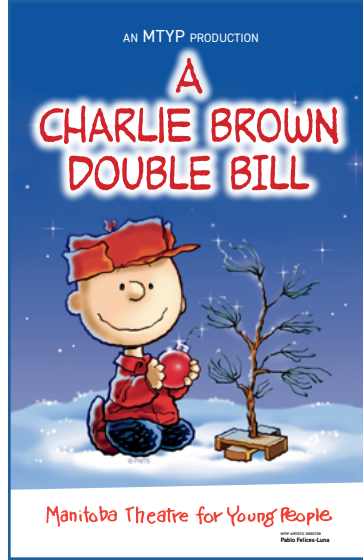
NEW DIRECTIONS IS LAUNCHING AN
EXCITING NEW PROGRAM IN 2023.

New Directions' Child Home Services is always focused on doing what's best for each child. In many cases, that means reuniting a child with their family, and helping that family grow and stay together.

In partnership with Manitoba Children's disABILITY Services, New Directions is launching the Bridge program. Bridge will help keep families together by offering more support so that children with disabilities can remain in their own home, where they grow and thrive.

The program will provide a therapeutic short stay for kids, giving their families a break to recharge. Families will also have access to services such as Occupational Therapy, Psychology, and Family Therapy. Launching soon, the program will meet families where they are and tailor support plans to help them achieve their goals and dreams.

“They say it takes a village to raise a child, and we want to be that village for families in need,” said Amy Karsin, Program Manager.



Credit: Manitoba Theatre for Young People

A NIGHT OUT: A CHARLIE BROWN DOUBLE BILL AND THE WINNIPEG JETS GAME

Children from our programs enjoyed a variety of fun and memorable events throughout this winter. This included watching the musical “A Charlie Brown Double Bill” at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People. They also went to a Winnipeg Jets game at Canada Life Centre. A first NHL game for many of them, the kids were a lucky charm as the Jets beat the Anaheim Ducks 3 to 2!

Experiences like these would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our donors and partner organizations. Your gifts help create precious memories for children in our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



HEALING: ONE BEAD AT A TIME

PEOPLE OF ALL AGES GATHER TO LEARN AND HEAL THROUGH BEADING

Historical trauma caused by colonization can make it difficult for Indigenous children and youth to find a sense of belonging in our society and to heal from past wounds. That's where the Opikihiwawin program comes in.

Opikihiwawin offers Indigenous adoptees and children and youth in foster care the opportunity to connect with their culture and biological families. The program has made a significant impact in the lives of its participants.

In January 2022, the program launched The Beading is Healing Circle. Its purpose is to promote and nurture the rebirth of Indigenous ways of life. It teaches people of all ages an ancient Indigenous healing remedy through the art and action of beading. Beading is a powerful healing remedy, but as with many Indigenous practices, is at risk of becoming a lost art.

The Beading is Healing Circle is led by a residential school survivor who is currently working on a master's degree in social work at the University of Manitoba. The program provides participants with a safe and welcoming space where they can learn various healing, calming, meditation, beading and journalling techniques. Participants can choose to journal during difficult times or practice beading as part of their daily routines.

The healing circles also encourage participants to discuss identity, wellness, and building upon innate strengths. These discussions are important in fostering a sense of community and helping participants to find their place in the world. Younger people who participate in the program are enthusiastic and open to expressing their feelings. If a youth is struggling with their feelings, an Elder is on call to offer one-on-one guidance.



A powerful Indigenous healing remedy, beading is at risk of becoming a lost art.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR
IDEAS & COMMENTS

You can contact us at info@newdirections.mb.ca

Since its inception, the Beading is Healing Circle has helped 35 participants ranging in age from 10-65 years old. Parents and grandparents bring their children/grandchildren while others attend on their own. Participants have expressed how much they appreciate being part of the healing circle and how it has helped them to build strong and meaningful relationships. They enjoy learning the art of beading and other healing techniques. And they are more at ease being with people who have similar life experiences.

We would like to thank the Johnston Family Foundation for generously funding this program throughout 2023.

OPIKIHAWIN CAMPAIGN

In August 2022, we launched the Opikihawin fundraising campaign to replace the many sacred handmade Indigenous items lost because of the fire and to introduce two new pilot programs.

We are happy to share that we have successfully raised over 65% of our \$100,000 goal. This includes funding for both pilot programs: "Beading is Healing Circles" and "Drum Making Teachings." We are incredibly grateful for the support we've received so far.

We are close to reaching our goal. [Will you help us reach it by donating today?](#) Your gift will directly support children, youth, adults and families in the Opikihawin program.



LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

You can leave a gift for future generations by including New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families Inc. in your will. Your gift ensures people will continue receiving essential and individualized services that will assist them in achieving the life they've dreamed of. A life full of promise, potential, respect, and self-worth. For more information about legacy giving, including tax benefits, please contact Marina Albo, Fund Development Manager at marina.albo@newdirections.mb.ca.

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