



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 24-049**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services  
**Resource Staff:** Kevin Gibbs, Director, Heritage Services  
**Date of Meeting:** February 20, 2024  
**Subject:** Renewal of the Service Level Agreement between the City of Kingston and the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (formerly the Kingston Indigenous Languages Nest)

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.5 Promote and support diversity.

**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to ask Council to approve the renewal of the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the City of Kingston and the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN).

On September 7, 2021, Council approved the first SLA with KNCLN (then known as the Kingston Indigenous Languages Nest or KILN) covering the last quarter of 2021 and all of 2022 ([Report Number 21-215](#)). This agreement included financial support transferred from the City of Kingston to KNCLN to fund initiatives that align with City-approved strategies and plans as well as Council's direction to support the potential for Indigenous cultural space.

Funding for the SLA in 2021 and in 2022, totaling \$62,500 (prorated to \$12,500 for 2021 and \$50,000 for 2022), was approved by Council to be drawn from the capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III. Through [Report Number 21-215](#) staff committed to including funding for the renewal of this SLA in the annual operating budget of the Heritage Services Department. To address inflationary pressures, the SLA funding for 2023 included a 2% inflationary increase to \$51,000. It is proposed that for 2024, the SLA funding will again include a 2% inflationary

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increase to \$52,020 for KNCLN operational funding. The operating budget for Heritage Services has been developed to include this SLA funding (\$52,020).

In addition, for 2024 KNCLN has agreed to take on the additional responsibility of managing the Katarokwi Indigenous Art and Food Market held weekly on Sundays from June 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 29<sup>th</sup> in Springer Market Square. For 2024, an additional \$18,000 is proposed to cover expenses related to managing the market to be drawn from the capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III, bringing the total amount proposed as part of the 2024 SLA to \$70,020.

The 'SLA 2023 Report' (Exhibit A) provides an overview of KNCLN's activities for the year. The report has been reviewed by staff who are satisfied KNCLN has met its obligations as required by the 2023 SLA. Staff are requesting that Council support the renewal of the SLA with KNCLN in 2024. The renewed agreement will continue to include several deliverables, notably the development and delivery of Indigenous language and cultural programming and educational opportunities.

Through a separate agreement ([Report Number 22-006](#)), the City has also leased to KNCLN property at 610 Montreal Street for a period of 5 years (beginning in January 2022) for delivery of services as outlined in the 2022 SLA and beyond, including Indigenous language and cultural programs.

**Recommendation:**

**That** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute a Service Level Agreement between the City of Kingston and the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN) that identifies the services to be provided by KNCLN and the associated funding to be issued by the City of Kingston for those services, in a form acceptable to the Director of Legal Services; and

**That** Council approve the release of \$52,020 from the Heritage Services Department's 2024 operating budget to support the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN) and the services identified as part of a Service Level Agreement between the City of Kingston and KNCLN in 2024; and

**That** Council approve the release of \$18,000 to be drawn from the capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III to support the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN) in the management of the Katarokwi Indigenous Art and Food Market.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Jennifer Campbell,  
Commissioner, Community  
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	

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**Options/Discussion:****Background**

On September 7, 2021, Council approved the first SLA with KNCLN (then known as the Kingston Indigenous Languages Nest or KILN) covering the last quarter of 2021 and all of 2022. Council also approved leasing the City-owned property at 610 Montreal Street to KNCLN for the delivery of Indigenous language and cultural programming. This initial SLA and the lease of 610 Montreal aligned with Council direction to support the potential for Indigenous cultural space. While physical spaces for delivering Indigenous-focused programming are crucial for language revitalization efforts, a major barrier to provisioning learning opportunities is a lack of sustainable operational funding.

The initial SLA between the City of Kingston and KNCLN provided funding to address this barrier. Funds came from capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III administered by the Heritage Services Department. The first SLA funding totalled \$62,500 (\$12,500 for the last quarter of 2021 and \$50,000 for 2022). Through [Report Number 21-215](#) staff committed to including funding for the renewal of the SLA in the annual operating budget of the Heritage Services Department. To address inflationary pressures, the SLA funding for 2023 included a 2% inflationary increase to \$51,000.

**Analysis**

Through this report, it is being recommended that the City's SLA with KNCLN be renewed again in 2024. It is proposed that for 2024, the SLA funding will again include a 2% inflationary increase to \$52,020. The operating budget for Heritage Services has been developed to include this SLA funding.

It is anticipated that the services to be included as part of the 2023 agreement will be as follows:

- Develop and implement programs that support Indigenous language learning, including land-based cultural teachings and relevant community gatherings.
- Develop and maintain partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations and initiatives in the Kingston region to support Indigenous-focused cultural programming and community-led events.

In addition, for 2024 KNCLN has agreed to take on the additional responsibility of managing the Katarokwi Indigenous Art and Food Market held from June 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 29<sup>th</sup> in Springer Market Square. For 2024, an additional \$18,000 is proposed to cover expenses related to managing the market to be drawn from the capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III, bringing the total amount proposed as part of the 2024 SLA to \$70,020.

As in previous years, the agreement will include specific language related to the management and expenditure of the funding KNCLN receives. It will also outline reporting requirements, including the submission of quarterly reports as well as a year-end report. The agreement will

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also include general terms and conditions typical of all such agreements the City of Kingston uses when entering partnerships with external organizations like KNCLN.

### **KNCLN SLA and Lease of 610 Montreal Street**

Through a separate agreement, the City has leased to KNCLN property at 610 Montreal Street for a period of 5 years (beginning in January 2022) for the delivery of services, including Indigenous language and cultural programs. Supporting KNCLN through an SLA and the property lease at 610 Montreal Street is a demonstrated commitment by the City of Kingston to support Indigenous-led community programming, associated smaller events and cultural gatherings.

### **KNCLN 'Year-End Report'**

In January 2024, KNCLN submitted a year-end report: 'The Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest Year-End Report 2023' (Exhibit A). This report provides an overview of the services identified for delivery as part of the 2023 SLA along with activities that are in keeping with the principles and intent of various City-approved heritage and cultural strategies.

Staff have reviewed the report and are satisfied KNCLN has met its obligations as required by the 2023 SLA. As a result, staff are recommending that the City of Kingston renew its SLA with KNCLN in 2024 so the organization can continue to provide Indigenous language and cultural programming. Language is a vital part of cultural connection and revitalization. KNCLN is dedicated to supporting language learning and is a well-established and respected organization within the Indigenous community and with Indigenous residents in Kingston. KNCLN continues to grow and expand the services it provides. In 2023, KNCLN was ratified as a member of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), increased staff numbers, and developed new programs and learning opportunities.

### **Next Steps**

With Council's approval to renew the City of Kingston's SLA with KNCLN, staff will meet with KNCLN staff to review the outcomes of the 2023 agreement and to discuss alterations, changes and/or additions that need to be made to finalize the 2024 Service Level Agreement. Once that work has been completed, the 2024 SLA can then be executed by the Mayor and Clerk in a form that is acceptable to the Director of Legal Services.

### **Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations**

A renewed SLA with KNCLN aligns with Council Strategic Priority 4.5.2 to Advance Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) in the Community by supporting programs for Indigenous language learning, cultural teachings and community gatherings. More specifically, Strategic Priority 4.5.2 includes the renovation of 610 Montreal Street in partnership with KNCLN for its enduring use as a centre of Indigenous language revitalization and cultural learning. A renewed SLA will provide operational funding to carry out these programmatic goals.

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**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

Investing in KNCLN through an SLA helps to fulfill various City-approved strategies and plans as well as Council's Strategic Priorities, particularly 4.5.2, in advancing Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) in the community.

**Financial Considerations:**

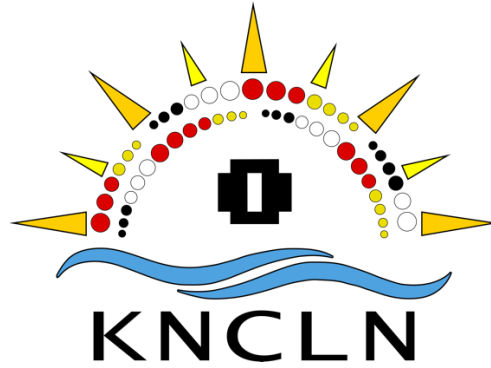
Operational funding for the SLA with KNCLN in 2024 was included as part of the development of the 2024 operating budget for the Heritage Services Department. Funding for the management of the Katarokwi Indigenous Art and Food Market will be drawn from the capital budget for Engage for Change Phase III.

**Contacts:**

Kevin Gibbs, Director, Heritage Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1354

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A – The Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest Year-End Report 2023



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# The Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest Year-End Report 2023

In accordance with our Service Level Agreement

with the

City of Kingston

January 2024

Prepared by Constance Carrière-Prill  
Executive Director





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## Strategic Plan

In July 2023, the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest (KILN) became known as the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN). We carry on the work of Indigenous language revitalization, foundational to our roots, while also expanding into full urban Indigenous programs and services.

### Organizational Mission

Strengthening connection to each other, the land, our cultures, and our identity.

### Vision

Guided by our ancestors’ love and wisdom, KNCLN is an organization that connects the urban Indigenous communities on this territory by growing safe and inclusive spaces to support one another and revitalize our cultures, languages, and worldview, for generations to come.

### Strategic Priorities

- Expanding Community Services
- Restoring Our Languages and Cultures
- Strengthening Our Organizational Resilience
- Nurturing Land & Food Spaces



## Governance

### Ratification under the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

2023 saw a significant milestone for our organization as we applied to become an official Friendship Centre under the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. In July 2023,

our application was accepted, and we were formally ratified as the 31<sup>st</sup> OFIFC member Centre in the province of Ontario. This change allows us to access core government funding and expand into service delivery to enhance community programs and services available to members of the urban Indigenous community.

## Board of Directors

2023 saw a changeover in our Board of Directors as former members transitioned off at the end of their term and new members joined us. We added core competences and strengths to best position our organization for the anticipated increased growth and operational capacity due to our transition to a Friendship Centre. Our board members are all members of the Indigenous community.

- **PRESIDENT: Carol Ann Budd**, Founder, Financial Advisor, Woodland Wealth.
- **VICE PRESIDENT: Laura Maracle**, Cultural Coordinator, Family and Child Services Lennox & Addington.
- **TREASURER: Aaron St. Pierre**, Chief Administrative Officer, Moose Deer Point First Nation
- **SECRETARY: Vicki Babcock**, RECE, Language & Cultural Leader, Kahwá:tsire Indigenous-Led Child & Family Programs
- **MEMBER: Grandmother Kate Brant**, Grandmother, Katarokwi Grandmother's Council; Indigenous Community Development Worker, Kingston Community Health Centre
- **MEMBER: Tracy Johnston**, Firekeeper, Katarokwi community; Elder's helper, Correctional Service of Canada.

## Committees

### Program Committee

Our Program Committee oversees existing programming and our program expansion. The committee meets monthly, is Chaired by board member Tracy Johnston, and comprises the Executive Director Constance Carrière-Prill, Anishinaabemowin Language Warrior team leader Dr. Lindsay Morcom and all KNCLN Program staff.

### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee provides financial oversight to the organization. The Committee meets monthly, is Chaired by Aaron St. Pierre, Board Treasurer and comprises Executive Director Constance Carrière-Prill, member at large Jacquie Costron and our assistant bookkeeper Kevin Vertatschitsch.

## Members

KNCLN currently has **60 official members** of the Corporation, an increase from 49 in 2022. The membership slate was renewed in September 2023 as per our corporation bylaws.

## Staff

### Senior Staff

The organization continues to be led by **Executive Director, Constance Carrière-Prill**, whose family has been associated with our organization since 2018. Constance is an Anishinaabemowin language learner. The Executive Director oversees the operations and expansion of the organization and represents KNCLN around multiple community tables. Constance holds a Bachelor of Honours degree from Queen's University in Global Development Studies, is a JD Candidate at Queen's Law and has an extensive career in business, management, consulting, and criminal justice.

### Staff

Our staff compliment has increased significantly in the past quarter with our transition to a Friendship Centre. Staff at the end of 2023 comprised:

1. **Lynda Gerow** – Operations Manager. Lynda is from the Wet'suwet'en Nation in Burns Lake, British Columbia. Her teachings are mostly Anishinaabe and Mohawk. Mukade Miiagan is her spirit name which means Black Wolfe. Lynda was one of the founding members of our precursor organization, the Kingston Indigenous Language Nest. Lynda's education and professional experience are in social work, community programming, harm reduction and early childhood education. Lynda holds many positions of responsibility throughout the community, is a Firekeeper and Powwow Dancer and is a member of the Katarokwi Grandmother's Council. Lynda manages the physical operations of our Centre, supervises on-site staff, and manages and coordinates drop-in programming.
2. **Deborah St. Amant** – Elder in Residence / Cultural Knowledge Keeper - Deb is Métis from Penetanguishene and Ojibwe (Bear Clan) from Henvey Inlet First Nation. An author and retired educator, Deb has spent decades learning Indigenous knowledge, providing community and education-based cultural teachings and leading ceremony. Deb came to this role alongside her current role as the Elder in Residence for Queen's University and the work she continues to do with youth in our community. As a lover of languages, Deb is one of our root organization's (KILN) original founders. Deb speaks English, French, Michif and Anishinaabemowin and is also a member of our Anishinaabemowin Language

Warrior team. Deb provides cultural support and guidance to our River ASSP Program, Indigenous Languages Program and the Intergenerational Early Childhood Pilot Program coming in 2024.

3. **Mandy Wilson** – Cultural Coordinator, Gardens, Medicines, and Youth. Mandy is a member of the Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation and is a language learner of both her family's traditional languages, Anishinaabemowin and Kanyen'kéha. Mandy coordinates our Bundles cultural healing program and programming related to our community gardens, plants and medicines and Indigenous food sovereignty. Mandy also facilitates the KNCLN Youth Connections Program and leads the KNCLN Indigenous Youth Council. Mandy holds knowledge in Indigenous Food Sovereignty and has professional experience in horticulture.
4. **Lindsey Pilon** – Coordinator of Children's Programming and On-the-Land Education. Lindsey is a member of the Oneida Nation (Turtle Clan) from Six Nations of the Grand River and is a learner of her family's On'nyota'aka (Oneida) language. Lindsey's professional background is in outdoor educational, cultural consulting and early childhood education. Lindsey is developing and piloting an Intergenerational Early Years program under funding from the Canadian Red Cross and coordinates our land-based learning events.
5. **Taylor Arndt** – Alternative Secondary School Program Coordinator. Taylor is a certified teacher with the Ontario College of Teachers and a graduate of the Queen's University Faculty of Education Indigenous Teacher Education Program. Taylor is Anishinaabe, does professional beadwork, has worked as a local journalist and is an Anishinaabemowin language learner. Taylor coordinates and facilitates the Alternative Secondary School Program, known as the River School, at the Katarokwi Learning Centre, in partnership with the Limestone District School Board.
6. **Breanna Berry – Indigenous Languages Program Coordinator.** Breanna is of mixed Kanyen'kehá:ka, Algonquin Anishinaabe, and Celtic/Euro-Settler heritage with familial roots in Kenhtè:ke (Tyendinaga) and Pìkwàkanagàn. She holds a bilingual International Honours Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Gender and Women's Studies, and she is also an avid language learner and is currently completing her University Certificate in Mohawk Language and Culture through Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na & Queen's University. Breanna holds a professional background in Indigenous program design, development and recruitment.
7. **Christine Allan – Executive Assistant.** Christine is a member of the Métis community, with a professional background in administration and bookkeeping. She holds an

associate degree in applied science in Medical Assisting from Ross Medical Education Centre in Minnesota.

8. **Ocean-Sea Lebrun** – Administrative Assistant. Ocean has professional experience in administration, community organizing and social services. She holds a Social Service Worker and Indigenous Wellness & Addiction Prevention Diploma and a Community Health Care Worker Certification.
9. **Annie Wapachee** – Kitchen Worker. Annie is a member of the Cree community and a fluent Cree first speaker. She has a professional background in food services and preparation and began with us full time in November 2023.
10. **Summer Students** – This summer, through a Canada Summer Jobs grant, KNCLN employed two full-time Indigenous students, Ryder Hughson and Stephanie Tiffe. Both students engaged with land-based programming, garden work, language resource development and assisted with our KYC Youth Connections group.

## Volunteers

This year, KNCLN coordinated a large number of volunteers across our various programs and events. Volunteers continue to play a key role in the delivery of KNCLN programs, either as traditional knowledge teachers, language warriors, in event support or in support of our Indigenous-led community gardens. The following list comprises some of this year's key program volunteers:

### **Kanien'kéha Language Warrior Volunteers:**

- Olivia Rondeau – Team Leader
- Breanna Berry – Indigenous Languages Program Coordinator
- Logan Maracle
- Jennie Hill
- Natasha Darling
- Laura Maracle
- Jurnee Maracle
- Lisa Cadue
- Otsistohkwí:yo Melissa Elliot, Kanyen'kehá:ka from Six Nations of the Grand River – Kanyen'kéha Program Mentor

### **Anishinaabemowin Language Warrior Volunteers:**

- Lindsay Morcom – Team Leader
- Grandmother Maureen Buchanan
- Grandmother Deborah St. Amant

- Grandmother and Board President Carol Ann Budd
- Vicki Babcock, KNCLN Board member
- Kimberly Debassige, past KNCLN Board member
- Albert Owl – Anishinaabemowin Language Mentorship Program Mentor

**Indigenous Teachings, Land Teachings, Cultural Support and Sacred Ceremonies:**

- Jayme Blondin, Sexual Assault Centre Kingston – mental health supports
- Kim Debassige – Anishinaabe water teachings, water songs, shaker teachings, medicine teachings
- Dionne Nolan – circle teachings, grief teachings
- Lorie Young - medicine teachings
- Becky Brant – garden and food support
- Lindsey Pilon – Oneida language support
- Carol Ann Budd – sweetgrass teachings, strawberry teachings, cultural support
- Liv Rondeau – Kenyen'kéha water teachings, bead teachings, seed teachings
- Laura Maracle – moon teachings, hide teachings, drumming, cultural support, language teachings
- Vicki Babcock – plant teachings
- Tracy Johnston – firekeeping, drumming, singing
- Diane Labelle – 2-Spirit teachings
- Roderick MacDonald – firekeeping
- Ash Kaduck – firekeeping
- Sebastian DeLine - firekeeping
- Albert Mills – men's drum
- Randy Cadue – cleaning services, firekeeping
- Donald Martin – firekeeping
- Taylor Rain Tobabandung – lacrosse teaching
- Kendall Tabobandung – lacrosse teaching
- Grandmother Kathy Brant – cultural support, justice teachings, food teachings and grief teachings
- Jaylene Cardinal – paint teachings
- Katrina Perritt and Sheri Revelle – childcare support
- Lynda Gerow – firekeeping, drumming, corn husk doll teachings
- Hilbert Buist – plant education
- Deborah St. Amant – feast bundles, hide teachings, dreamcatcher teachings, drum teachings, tobacco teachings, ribbon skirt and sewing teachings
- Lisa Cadue – food teachings, dreamcatcher teachings, hide teachings, water teachings, water songs, medicine pouch and moccasin teachings
- Caitlyn Newey – food teaching
- Willow Prue – hat burning, turtle teachings
- Mireille Lapointe – cultural support

- Colleen Jackson – cultural support
- Autumn Watson – wellness teachings
- Maureen Buchanan - Sweetwater teachings, language teachings
- Penni-Dawn Kernot – drumming and singing
- Billie Kerns – poetry teachings
- Sheldon Travis – tomato canning teaching
- Ross Saunders – animal hide teachings
- Judi Montgomery – dreamcatcher teachings
- Damian Kigutaa – Inuit Games teaching
- Aalla Lnu – Inuit Games teaching
- Crystal Loft – youth cultural support
- Mandy Smart – youth cultural support
- Breanna Berry – youth language teaching
- Jurnee Maracle – drumming and singing
- Jaida Maracle – drumming and singing

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## Programs

### Summary

**Number of Programs: 14**

**Number of Events: 255**

**Number of Participants: 6,897**

**Total Program Hours: 1,530**

### KNCLN Centre Drop-In & Hot Food Program

Participant Total: 426

In October, KNCLN began opening to the public for regular drop-in hours Monday through Friday. We also hired a full-time kitchen staff member, Annie Wapachee, who cooks daily soups, hot snacks and goodies for those attending, and for our programs, events and workshops. Community members come to the drop-in for a hot beverage, food, community or to seek support and services from our staff.



## KNCLN On-the-Land and In the Community

Participant Total: 1402

The KNCLN On-the-Land Program saw a variety of programs out in our urban community and on the land, led by KNCLN Childhood Education and On-the-Land Coordinator, Lindsey Pilon. This included a 5 session Indigenous STEM program in collaboration with the Kingston Frontenac Public Library with themes focused on seeds and sprouts, vision boards, numeracy and target practice, stamp carving and balloon powered cars. KNCLN also launched Family Nights at the Centre, led in the first part of the year by staff volunteering after-hours and with food-preparation donated by staff and supported by community members with potluck. Themes included crafting, collages, beading, a plant walk and boundaries in co-parenting with a special guest instructor.

In March, KNCLN offered a three days of Water Teachings workshops, guided by knowledge keepers, grandmothers and community elders and attended by community members of all-ages. In August, KNCLN, with financial support from the City of Kingston, organized a Tyendinaga Powwow Bus Trip, which provided transportation and food for 39 members of the community to travel and participate in our nearest powwow.

KNCLN held our Annual General Meeting on Sunday, April 23 at the Kingston Community Health Centre Site. The event was attended by the Corporation's membership and included activities for all ages, along with a sacred fire to help us turn over our year and welcome in the new.

KNCLN organized two large-scale community events, in support of National Indigenous Peoples' Day on June 21, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. NIPD received financial and logistical support from the City of Kingston and financial contributions from the Limestone District School Board. The organizing working group included collaborators from many local Indigenous organization.

NIPD was a tremendous success, with 12 hours of celebration including Corn Husk Doll making, a lacrosse demonstration, a hockey demonstration with the Kingston Frontenacs, a visit from the Kingston Fire Department, children's games and a community language scavenger hunt, bouncy-castles and climbing wall, live entertainment, the LDSB Indigenous Youth open-mic showcase, strawberry teachings, meal tickets for on-site food vending, a youth art showcase, vendors and more. The evening ended with a concert by Juno-award winning group Digging Roots in Springer Market Square.

NDTR reflected the sentiment of the day, with activities and events before and after focused on healing and grief, and the day included the reading of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Act,

with guest lecturer Dr. Kelly Maracle from Queen's University. Multiple members of the KNCLN staff and board participated as speakers and educators throughout the community on NDTR.

### Gardens & Medicines Program

Total Participants: 229

This year, KNCLN installed another new community garden under our care, at City Park. This was implemented under a CIHR-funded collaboration with the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle, and with financial support from the Limestone District School Board. We also collaborated with the City to install and plant four traditional medicine planters, in the colours of the Anishinaabe medicine wheel. This has been a process of reclamation and restoration that holds tremendous significance to our community and situates community gardens within the urban centre in accessible spaces.

It has also increased opportunities for collaborating with LDSB students, who have been able to attend City Park for land-based programming. We expanded the LDSB collaboration with 14 sessions held inside of LDSB schools, with a focus on bringing traditional plant and medicine knowledge to LDSB students.

Garden volunteers and program participants include community members of all ages, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Garden work centred language and land-based teachings, including traditional planting methods, traditional knowledge on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, and plant and seed teachings. The program was primarily taught through kinetic learning and mentorship.

Our Cultural Coordinator Gardens and Medicines also facilitated 20 engaging and educational forest foraging walks throughout the spring, summer and fall. The intended audience is urban Indigenous people of all ages; however the program remains open to include non-Indigenous participants as well. They continue to be especially popular with the youth and young adult demographic.

Foraging walks were held in urban parks throughout the City. Methods of teaching included storytelling, information on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, written materials which contained Indigenous language, information on plant identification, uses and recipes. Participants engaged in learning to identify plants, walking through spaces together, tasting edible plants, identifying harmful (toxic) plants and look-alikes, and physically harvesting items. The groups would then learn to cook the harvested items together using trail-cooking methods.

Garden and foraging activities included seed saving, seed teachings, seed ceremony, the sustainable/honorable harvest, plant names in Anishinaabemowin, sweet-water harvest and ceremony, maple teachings, tree tapping, plant identification walks, canning sessions, sustainable and water wise gardening., garden planning, garden care and working bees or volunteer days at the garden. Foraged Plants included dandelion, elderberry, cattail, raspberry, wild carrot, wild mushrooms, strawberry, serviceberry, curly dock buckthorn, sweetgrass, tobacco. Mandy also created a “Forage to table” game to teach traditional foraging to young adults and developed a Forage to Table Guide to facilitate plant-based knowledge education.

### Building your Bundles

Total Participants: 1,874

The Building your Bundles Program commenced as part of our CIHR-funded work, aimed at healing and reconnection to land, language and culture following the Covid-19 pandemic. It now continues under OFIFC funding as a core program. 43 Bundles workshops were held throughout the year, with attendees spanning all age groups.

The workshops are facilitated by the Cultural Coordinator Gardens and Medicines, in collaboration with Language Warriors and knowledge teachers. Methods of teaching include song, dance, drumming, traditional teachings, mentorship, printed materials, audio-visual materials, referencing library resources, encouraging imitation, memorization and repetition, skills building and hands-on learning.

Bundles activities this year have included an Inuit Games weekend, traditional cooking classes, hide cleaning, tanning and hide processing, a 6 week indigenous mindful wellness program in collaboration with Sexual Assault Centre Kingston, shaker making, family nights, animal teachings (deer, moose, turtle), sweet grass braiding, regalia and ceremonial garb making, Indigenous poetry and Storytelling workshops, traditional games, natural fiber dyeing, weaving, rope-making, community ceremonies such as sweet-water.

### The Indigenous Languages Program

This year, we created a position for an Indigenous Language Program Coordinator, which is funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and staffed by Breanna Berry. Breanna coordinates our Centre’s growing Indigenous Languages Program, is developing our online language resources, recruiting new Warriors, establishing a fee-for-service program for interpreting services and creating professional development opportunities for our language team members.

### *Beginner Anishinaabemowin*

Total participants: 360

On Thursday evenings through the fall and winter months, KNCLN hosted Anishinaabemowin language classes, facilitated by Queen's University Professor, linguist, and educator Dr. Lindsay Morcom. Intended participants are mature youth and adults 16+. Teaching methods include slides, repetition exercises, games, songs, written work, homework, and the use of Google classroom in between classes and modules. We successfully integrated the 'Anki' app as part of a collaborative pilot project with the University of Toronto, to facilitate adult learning. Groups regularly see between 12 and 20 participants weekly. We also developed a full 12 week KNCLN Beginner Anishinaabemowin language class, which has now been integrated online in a D2L platform that will be accessible to language learners through KNCLN.

### *Language Mentorship Program*

Participant Total: 140

11 Language Warriors (teachers) were partnered in two language teams with advanced Indigenous Language Mentors or First Speakers in both Anishinaabemowin and Kanyen'kéha for a series of group mentoring sessions as part of our continued growth of the Mentoring Program. The Program is designed to help build the skill level and language competency of our Language Warrior Team members within our core Indigenous Languages program. The program is funded through 2025 under the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund.

### *Language Learning Workshops*

The Kanyen'kéha Language Warrior Team enjoyed an immersion weekend at Elbow Lake Education Centre. Participants enjoyed paddling, braiding corn, having a shared dinner, and participating in a storytelling workshop, all while learning new vocabulary in Kanyen'kéha. Participants expressed that their experiences during this weekend contributed greatly to their language learning.

KNCLN hosted Tony Drews, Co-Founder of Nashke Native Games, an organization whose mission is to teach Anishinaabemowin through engaging game play. 3 separate games events were held over a weekend in December, included sharing a meal, with staff, families and all-ages attendance.

## KNCLN Youth Connections

Total Participants: 323

Our KNCLN Youth Connections Program, initially funded under United Way and now a core program supported by OFIFC, has grown significantly since its humble beginnings in 2022. The drop-in group program supports urban Indigenous youth aged 12-19 and runs weekly on Mondays after school. The program is facilitated by Cultural Coordinator Mandy Wilson, Language Warriors and knowledge keepers. In 2023, we held 46 drop-in sessions. Youth engage in a variety of activities, events and projects in an effort to strengthen community relationships, increase exposure to Indigenous languages and cultural teachings and create a sense of belonging. We now regularly see weekly attendance of approximately 20 youth.

Methods of teaching include song, dance, drumming, traditional teachings, mentorship, printed materials, audio-visual materials, referencing library resources, encouraging imitation, memorization and repetition, skills building and hands-on learning.

Programming this past year has included: foraging walks, land stewardship teachings, invasive species removal and remediation, language learning, traditional and modern cooking classes, hide cleaning, tanning and hide processing, dreamcatcher making, seed teachings, animal teachings, ribbon skirts & ribbon shirts, feast bundles, medicine pouch making, medicine teachings, rights of passage, field trips and weekend workshops at places like beaches, Indigenous themed museums, Indigenous art galleries, movie nights, Toronto Zoo, escape rooms, Laser tag, youth dances and youth socials.

## The KNCLN Youth Mountain-Biking Program

This year saw the launch of our KNCLN Youth Mountain Biking Program, in partnership with MTB Mountain Biking Kingston. The purpose of the program is to promote activity, healthy living and connection the land and nature. Through OFIFC funding, KNCLN purchased 8 quality mountain bikes and riding equipment, and youth attended an introductory workshop, familiarizing themselves with the MTB riding trails and pump track, and getting education on bike safety and riding tips. KNCLN has since purchased 5 youth memberships to MTB and youth have access to KNCLN bikes and equipment to ride trails whenever they wish.

## KNCLN Indigenous Youth Council

This fall saw the founding of the KNCLN Indigenous Youth Council, comprised of local Indigenous youth who will represent our community at the OFIFC table and as members of the Ontario Indigenous Youth Council. The Council is in the early stages has had two planning events and a total of 14 attendees.

### The Katarokwi 2 Spirit and Indigiqueer Group

KNCLN was proud to secure funding through OFIFC to support the establishment of the Katarokwi 2 Spirit and Indigiqueer Group. It held its first two events at our Centre, led by a member of the community and in collaboration with Enchanté.

### The Alternative Secondary School Program

In September 2023 the KNCLN launched the Alternative Secondary School Program (River School) in collaboration with Limestone District School Board. The program runs out of the Katarokwi Learning Centre and replaced the previous program run with another agency. Diverging from the approach of its predecessor program, KNCLN staffed the position of ASSP Coordinator with a certified teacher, to create an equitable teaching partnership with the LDSB staffed teacher position in the classroom. Our Coordinator, Taylor Arndt, is a graduate from the Queen's University Faculty of Education Indigenous Teacher Education Program, and coordinates and facilitates cultural training and the infusion of cultural knowledge into classroom learning.

In the first term of the 2023-24 academic year, 13 Indigenous students were enrolled in this secondary school program. In addition to completing OSSD courses, students engaged in the following activities: a 5-day animal hides collaborative workshop on KLC property, drum circles with local knowledge keepers, a multi-session mural painting with local Indigenous artists, sewing sessions with our Elder in Residence to craft drum bags, making healing blankets, Christmas gift delivery, class gatherings around the fire, a Girls Inc. gathering with local Mohawk knowledge keepers, a field trip to Wynn Farms for Kanien'keha harvest teachings, pumpkin harvesting, carving, and corn maze. Youth also participated in a collaborative smoking-cessation/Traditional Tobacco use program.

Students are supported through the following: the KNCLN Nutrition Program (daily snacks and lunches), the KNCLN/LDSB Take what you Need Station, the LDSB Food Share Program, the LDSB Indigenous Education Team, a KNCLN funded Youth Mental Health Counsellor, the KNCLN Elder-in-Residence, the LDSB Adolescent Care Worker, Social Workers (LDSB & KFLA), and a KAIROS Addictions Counsellor.

### The Gibanemindimin/ Teyakwatatyenawá:se

Those who attend our Centre regularly take what they need from our community sharing centre - Gibanemindimin/ Teyakwatatyenawá:se ("we all share"). The centre provides fresh produce from Loving Spoonful as well as plants and traditional medicines (tobacco, cedar, sage and sweetgrass) harvested from our community garden program, cultural items (smudge kits, medicine bags), diapers, personal protective equipment, Covid-19 rapid tests, hygiene items,

lice kits and a variety of other useful household items, toys and clothing that anyone attending programming at KNCLN may take home with them.

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## Community Partnerships

KNCLN has collaborated with the following community partners, organizations, funders and grassroots initiatives during 2023:

- Mutual Aid Katarokwi
- Katarokwi Grandmother's Council
- Kingston Frontenac Public Library
- Belle Park Project
- Belle Island Caretakers
- Odemin Collective
- Kewaywin Circle
- KASSI
- Walking the Path of Peace Together
- Youth Diversion Program
- Queen's Law
- Queen's Faculty of Education
- Hockey Diversity Alliance
- Extend-a-Family Kingston
- Sexual Assault Centre Kingston
- Interval House
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- Juvenis Festival
- Queen's University
- Limestone District School Board
- Tipi Moza
- Kingston Community Health Centre
- Family and Children's Services Lennox and Addington
- Community Foundation of Kingston and Area
- Freedonia
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Canadian Red Cross
- The City of Kingston
- 4 Directions Student Centre
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na

- Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle
- United Way KFLA
- University of Toronto
- Loving Spoonful
- MTB Mountain Biking Kingston
- One Roof
- The Food Sharing Project
- Khalsa Aid Canada
- Wynne Farms
- Katarokwi Learning Centre
- Kingston Jewish Council
- KAIROS

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## Outcomes

In regard to Indigenous language revitalization, the core program which commenced 2023, a variety of measurements are used to analyze how participants' language skills may be improving. A key measure is the ease at which a learner begins to introduce themselves in the language, as well as efforts to expand the introduction to include culturally relevant norms such as clan and Nation. Other indicators are: word count, spontaneous use of language, conversations about language (demonstrates comprehension of concepts), self-reported confidence and improvements, increased access of KNCLN's language library resources, increased exposure to our pre-determined vocabulary, joining in with songs, singing and drumming along in ceremony. In addition, KNCLN continues in its partnership with lead researcher and neuro-linguist Jed Meltzer from Baycrest/University of Toronto in the 3-year pilot of language acquisition software for learners of the Anishinaabemowin language.

Outcomes of other programming are analyzed through trends in program attendance, responsiveness and uptake of new events and workshops, feedback from community when soliciting input, requests for expanded services, waitlists and the deepening of our community partnerships.

## Impact

Program impacts this past year have comprised feedback from community consultation, research initiatives and self-reports. Primarily, this past year saw us engaged in an Indigenous-led research project with Queen's University and the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle focused on the impacts of our community-based programming, with particular focus on our gardens,



medicines and bundles programs. Feedback was collected via questionnaires, personal interviews and participation in a number of community circles.

This collective feedback has enabled us to monitor trends and be responsive to community needs in our program planning and organizational decision-making. It was this ongoing feedback that informed our needs-based analysis of existing programs in 2023, and formed the consideration of solutions for expansion to meet growing needs. Our application to become a friendship centre under OFIFC was the direct response to communicated community needs, to create greater impact as we expand from the program space into Indigenous-focused community services.

Research participants shared the deep-rooted meaning that access to KNCLN's programs has contributed to their lives, the healing power of language and land-based learning and the life-line that is community. Members spoke of their evolution throughout program participation, the meaningful relationships formed and the transformation among their youth and in their families.

When the ASSP program commenced in September, the classroom regularly saw only 3 of the 12 enrolled students. Through the hard work of our Coordinator to create a welcoming and safe environment, provide added food, cultural and mental health supports and taking a direct interest, student engagement is up, and this past term ended with 11 students still enrolled and regular high attendance rates of 9+ students.

The KNCLN Youth Connections group has engaged with hundreds of youth throughout this past year. By reaching into the community for increased collaborations with LDSB and other youth agencies, the fledgling group which initially saw 3-5 participants is now regularly seeing groups of 20 or more youth, with some having to be turned away. This increased engagement demonstrates the tremendous impact of creating a youth-focused, culturally safe and welcoming environment of community for our children.

We have also seen an increase in family participation in events and programs, contributing to strengthening of family ties and learning together. In response, 2024 has already seen a flurry of new programming added which directly supports families, women and men. We are also set to begin piloting parenting education and family-based early years programming. We look forward to reporting on these numbers at the end of this next year.

Our drop-in hours has created a warm and welcoming environment for those eager to connect with their Indigenous roots and community, but without existing connections. Our close proximity to the Integrated Care Hub, which hosts a large number of people who identify as Indigenous, has created increased opportunity for relationship and connection from those who may hold distrust of formal organizations. Since our drop-in opened, we have seen a slow

increase in the number of ICH residents who feel safe coming to our Centre for a bowl of soup, conversation and engagement.

Clients continue to share that the lack of land-access for urban Indigenous people is overcome by being able to attend on-the-land programs; people want to get out and spend time on the land and this gives them the confidence to do so. They want to know our plant relations better. Those attending foraging walks regularly comment on the increase in self sufficiency and autonomy the knowledge gives them, as well as how learning to forage can positively impact their financial and food security in the midst of a financial crisis and rising costs of living.

Overall, KNCLN program participants express appreciation for the increased visibility of Indigenous languages and cultural representation in the community, gratitude for a space that they can gather in to call their own, and a desire to see increased services as we continue to grow.

We continue to recognize the importance and relevance of being unapologetically Indigenous, normalizing the expression of Indigenous culture in our urban areas.