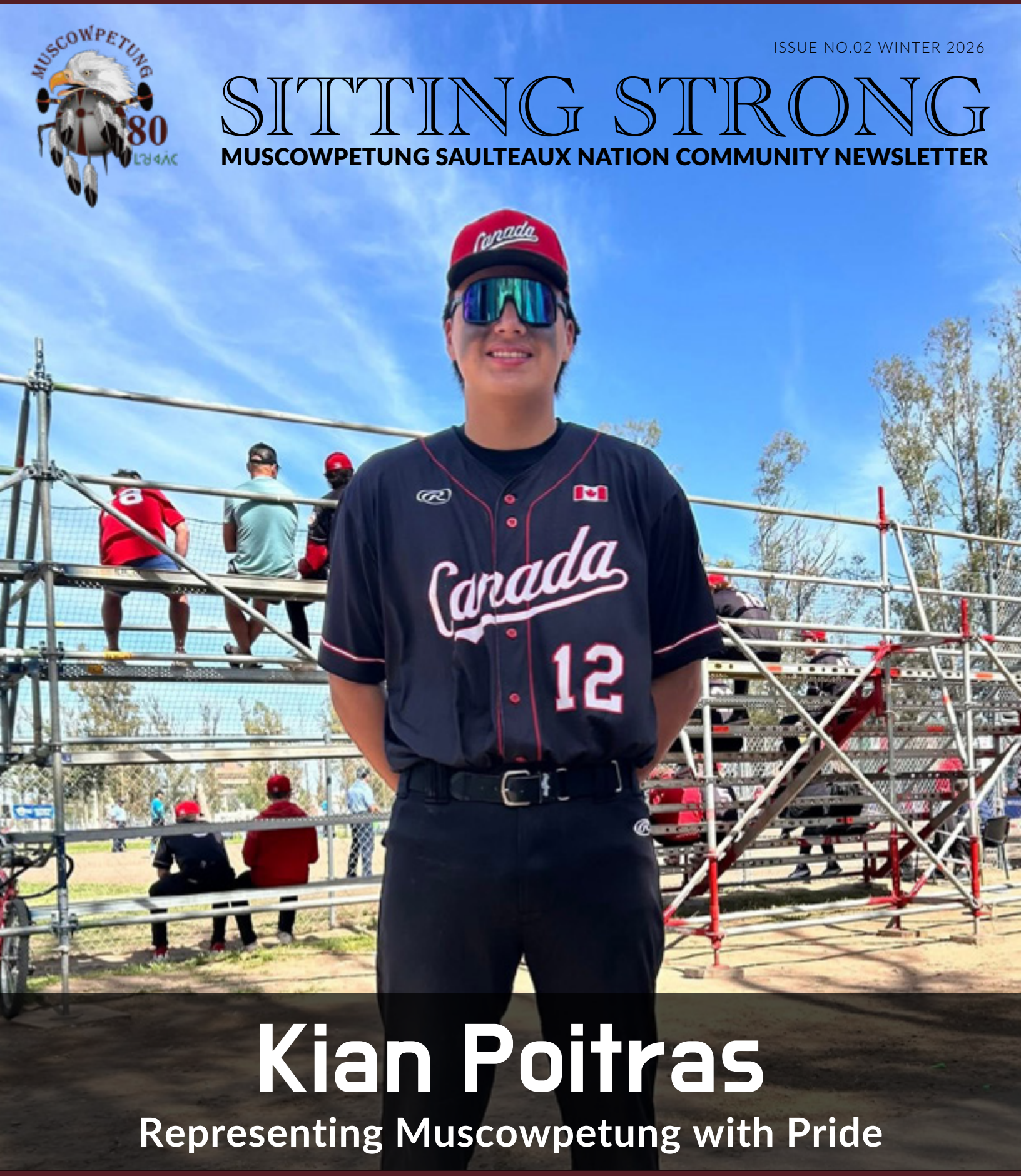
ISSUE NO.02 WINTER 2026

SITTING STRONG

MUSCOWPETUNG SAULTEAUX NATION COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Kian Poitras

Representing Muscowpetung with Pride

INSIDE: LEADERSHIP MESSAGES - MSBD UPDATE - MEMBER PROFILES

URBAN UPDATES - DEPARTMENT UPDATES - EVENTS GALLERIES

“Thank you again for your trust, your participation, and your continued belief in our Nation’s future. With appreciation and respect, I thank you for walking this path with us.”

GREETINGS FROM CHIEF MELISSA TAVITA

To our valued Muscowpetung membership

I want to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude for the honour and responsibility you have entrusted to me to serve as your Chief. Your support and encouragement continue to guide the work we do each day on behalf of our Nation. Thank you as well for taking the time to read our community newsletter. This publication was created in response to what we have heard from you - a desire for stronger communication, greater transparency, and a meaningful way to stay connected to our programs, services, and operations.

This newsletter is a reflection of the hard work happening across our Nation. I extend my sincere appreciation to all of our departments - Housing, Health, Public Works, Prevention Services, Education, Income Assistance and every other team working behind the scenes - for their dedication and public service. Your commitment strengthens our community and supports the wellbeing of our families, Elders, youth, and future generations. The recent successes shared within these pages are a testament to the collective effort of staff, leadership, and membership working together.

As we move forward, I encourage all members to help shape this newsletter by submitting your stories, achievements, and member profiles. We want this to be a tool that belongs to everyone - a space where we celebrate one another and share the journey we are building together. Thank you again for your trust, your participation, and your continued belief in our Nation’s future. With appreciation and respect, I thank you for walking this path with us.

Chief Melissa Tavita
Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation

INTRODUCING DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS JOHNNY WALKER

Good afternoon, colleagues.

Please note that my name is Johnny Walker and I'm the new Director of Operations for the Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation and officially started on January 19, 2026.

I'm a Treaty Status First Nation from the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in Northern Saskatchewan & a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan.

I have worked for First Nation Bands & Tribal Council's for my entire professional career of 28 years in Saskatchewan & Ontario.

As a new employee of Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation, I welcome your guidance and advice as I transition into my new position and get to know everyone in the organization and the Nation that we work for.

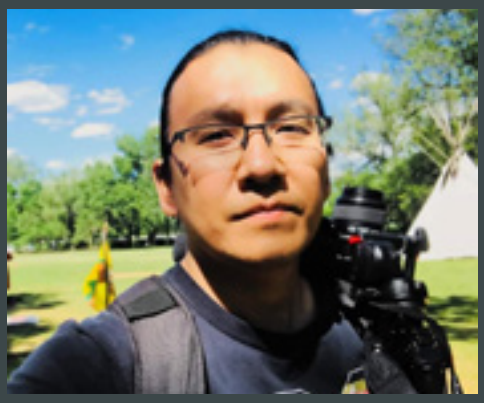
Please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone to have coffee / pop and a conversation and I love meeting via MS Teams or Zoom as well.

I certainly look forward to meeting you and welcome any ideas and / or suggestions that you have for the advancement and enhancement of our Nation that we represent and serve.

Thank you so much and have a great day today because you deserve it.

Sincerely,

Johnny A.Walker
B.Commerce, FNMI.Dir



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Thank you for picking up another copy of Sitting Strong! In this issue, we look back at past events and share a lot of great stories from members and our departments of the great things we are doing and planning for the new year! Thank you to this beautiful community for allowing me to continue sharing stories and doing what I love!

Sincerely,

Chris Tyrone Ross
Print & Publications Coordinator

"SITTING STRONG"
Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation's Community Newsletter

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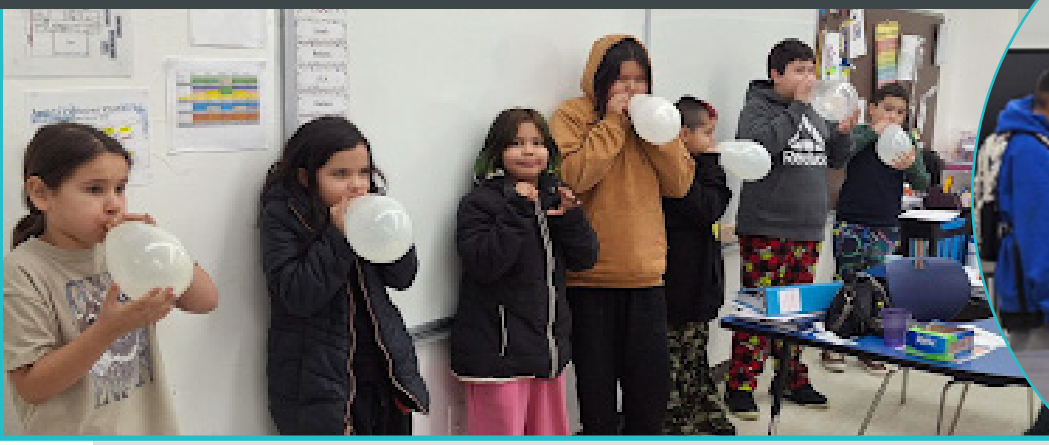
EDUCATION UPDATE

5



Muscowpetung Education Centre Update

As we move through another exciting season at our school, I am proud to share that so many positive things have been happening in our learning community.

Our Winterfest was a wonderful celebration of togetherness, culture, and winter fun. Students enjoyed outdoor activities, laughter, and time connecting with one another in a meaningful way. It was heartwarming to see families and community members join us and help make the day such a success.

We were also honoured to host our Elders Storytelling Week. The knowledge, teachings, and stories shared by our Elders created powerful learning moments for our students and staff. These experiences continue to strengthen our commitment to land-based learning and culturally grounded education. Hearing stories rooted in lived experience helps our students deepen their understanding of identity, respect, and community.

Another highlight was our recent Parent/Guardian Engagement Evening. Thank you to everyone who attended and took time to connect with teachers and staff. Strong partnerships between home and school are essential to student success, and we truly value your involvement.

As we look ahead, our mid-year report card conferences will take place on March 26th. This is an important opportunity to celebrate growth, discuss progress, and set goals for the remainder of the school year. We encourage all families to attend and connect with your child's teacher.

Our students and staff continue to work hard, particularly in strengthening reading skills across all grades. We are seeing growth in reading engagement and achievement, and we remain committed to supporting every learner. At the same time, we are intentionally increasing land-based opportunities within our classrooms to ensure learning remains connected to culture, community, and the land.

We are also proud of our Grade 12 graduates, who have begun fundraising efforts for their year-end graduation trip. We are excited to support them as they work toward this milestone celebration. Stay tuned for upcoming fundraising events and opportunities to show your support!

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we are building a strong and vibrant school community.

Miigwetch!

Ashley Pennington
Principal
Muscowpetung Education Centre

GALLERY: 2025 CHEEKUK DAYS

Cheekuk Days 2025 Celebrated Community, Culture and Connection

In August 2025, Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation hosted its annual Cheekuk Days. Community members and visitors gathered for a Pow Wow, bingo, golf day, dances, a drone show, traditional workshops, self-care sessions, and youth activities. Held primarily at the Muscowpetung Education Complex, and the new pow wow arbour, the event provided daily meals, entertainment and a safe, family-friendly atmosphere, leaving lasting memories and strengthening community spirit. The week long event ended with a concert by Charlie Major and special guests!

GALLERY: 1ST ANNUAL TRADITIONAL POW WOW

Historic First Pow Wow Celebrated at Muscowpetung

Last Summer, Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation proudly celebrated its first-ever Pow Wow, marked by its first Grand Entry inside the Nation's new Pow Wow Arbour (a project three years in the making led by Chief Operating Officer Myke Agecoutay). Chief and Council welcomed thousands of visitors to witness the historic moment. Hundreds of dancers and singers filled the arbour, led by Muscowpetung leadership, neighbouring Chiefs, and Knowledge Keepers. The Pow Wow Committee was also recognized for bringing this long-awaited celebration to life.

MEMBER PROFILES

CREATING PATHWAYS – ASHLEY DAVIDSON BUILDS SPACE FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN SOCCER

My name is Ashley Davidson, I am a proud member of Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation. I am the daughter of Laura Kolodziezak and Dwayne Davidson. My Kokum was Margaret Kolodziezak (Tuckanow) and my grandmother was Joan Davidson (Okeweehow /Lavallee).

My soccer journey began unexpectedly at the age of 12. I had just started at a new school in the Cathedral area in Regina, SK, when a group of friends asked if I wanted to play soccer outside. I showed up, kicked the ball around, and was handed an application—without really knowing what it was for. A few weeks later, my mom called me into the room and asked when I had decided to try out for competitive soccer. I told her I didn't even know I had. She then informed me that I had made the team.

From ages 12 to 16, I played competitively with FC Regina (formerly known as ACFC – Austria Capital Football Club). By 16, life required more from me at home, and I stepped back from the intense commitment of competitive soccer to help take care of my siblings.

At 18, I returned to the sport I loved, joining both a recreational adult co-ed league and a semi-competitive women's league.

Now the age of 35, I have continued to play consistently, participating in countless tournaments throughout the years. Some of my recent experiences include Women's Masters FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) Nationals, provincials, and even traveling to Mosakahiken Cree Nation to compete in a 20,000 dollar cash tournament.

In 2025, I embarked on one of the most meaningful projects of my soccer career: forming the first-ever Indigenous women's Regina WCP (World Class Players) soccer team for the well-known Regina World Class Players tournament.

I brought together players from many Nations, including Kawacatoose, Waganakising Odawa, Yellow Quill, Sweetgrass, Pimicikamak, Opaskwayak, and Santee Dakota Nation of Nebraska, USA, and the Manitoba Métis Nation. Our team competed in the Saskatoon World Cup and a memorial tournament in North Battleford, proudly representing our Nations and our growing presence within the sport.

Our 2026 plans include attending both the Regina and Saskatoon WCP tournaments, as well as competing in multiple Rez tournaments across Canada.

Although my youth playing days are behind me, I hope that building this team creates new pathways for Indigenous female youth. Soccer is rapidly growing in popularity across North America, and the opportunities to play at a world-class level are becoming more accessible. It's my hope that our presence inspires the next generation—showing them that these spaces belong to them too, and that their talent deserves to be seen.

– Ashley Davidson

YVONNE PRATT
WOMEN OF THE DAWN

Interview by Chris Tyrone Ross

For more than 40 years, Yvonne Pratt has dedicated her life to helping others. As coordinator of Women of the Dawn, a grassroots organization founded by Ivy Kennedy, and based in Saskatchewan, she works daily on the front lines - supporting families, feeding those in need, and helping Indigenous people navigate complicated systems. A proud member of Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation, Pratt says the work isn't easy, but it fills her heart.

"It's a good feeling to help people out there," she says. "I've been helping people with problems, addiction, and living on the street... mothers, single parents. I usually try to keep the father and mother together, if I could, so that children can have a better life."

At Women of the Dawn, Pratt oversees a range of services: emergency food programs for young families, housing help for people experiencing homelessness, and support for parents with children in care. One important part of the job includes helping people complete difficult paperwork—especially those applying for residential school or day school compensation.

"A lot of them have problems with their forms," she explains. "We help them fill them out."

The organization doesn't receive core funding, which makes sustaining their work a challenge.

"That's why we have the awards every year," she says. "It's a fundraiser to keep ourselves going."

But these annual awards, known across the province, serve a bigger purpose than just fundraising. They recognize Indigenous people who are doing hard, often uncelebrated work in their communities. "It's good to see that you can recognize our people," Pratt says. "It's not easy working among your own people. It's a hard job. And it's nice when you can thank them for the work they've done."

The awards take place every November, nominations are accepted until mid-month, and anyone can call the office to put someone's name forward.

Beyond her day-to-day responsibilities and the annual awards, Pratt is often involved in organizing community events around issues that matter deeply. On the day of this interview, she was helping lead an event dedicated to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, followed by a public conversation about fentanyl use and its impact on Indigenous communities.

"It really feels good to help people," she repeats, gently and with conviction.

Whether it's offering emergency food, walking families through crisis, or building community awareness around critical issues, Yvonne Pratt's work is grounded in compassion and commitment. And although she doesn't seek recognition for herself, her leadership is felt by hundreds who rely on Women of the Dawn every year.

With her feet firmly planted in community and her heart open to those in need, Yvonne Pratt embodies the spirit of service—and shows what it truly means to walk beside people, not in front of them.

MUSCOWPETUNG
– SAULTEAUX BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS –

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: WE ARE HEADING INTO THE NEW YEAR WITH LOTS OF EXCITING THINGS HAPPENING AT MSBD!

First, I want to welcome Erica Anaquod to the MSBD team! Erica has joined us as the Manager of Procurement and Labour Relations. Erica proudly resides on the Nation. With over 16 years of hands-on experience in construction and project leadership, and a strong background in environmental practices, she focuses on building partnerships, creating opportunities for community members, and supporting a strong, sustainable, and thriving future for Muscowpetung. Guided by Indigenous knowledge and a deep respect for the land, Erica is dedicated to advancing the Nation's growth while honouring its traditions. Erica has already proven instrumental in moving forward some of the Procurement partnerships that I will discuss below.

In our Energy portfolio, we are continuing to work towards closing the financing on a $135 million solar project near Edmonton, AB. The financing will enable MSBD and our nation to partner with Star Blanket Cree Nation and Fort Chipewyan Metis Nation to purchase a majority 51% stake of the project. Our team is continuing negotiations and due diligence with the project developer and with Canada Infrastructure Bank with an expectation that we will be able to close in the coming months. Following the closing of the financing, the project will go into construction this year and is expected to be operational in 2027.

Elsewhere in our Energy portfolio, in early January we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to partner with Star Blanket Cree Nation, Nekaneet Cree Nation, and Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation to pursue equity opportunities in operating renewable energy projects including multiple wind farms in Alberta. Successfully entering into this MOU enables our team to work with Canada Development Investment Corporation and private equity partners to secure funding for the potential acquisitions now and in the future.

Brock Muscowpetung Services

We are pleased to also announce new partnerships in our procurement portfolio. At the end of 2025 we formalized our relationship with Brock Group, forming a new partnership called Brock Muscowpetung Services. Brock is a leading

MUSCOWPETUNG TRANSDEV

Brock Muscowpetung Services LTD.

provider of scaffolding, insulation, and other services to heavy industries across North America and they are excited to partner with MSBD to expand their business in Saskatchewan. Already the partnership has signed a contract for services with Mosaic and recently won a bid for services with K+S. Our team is engaged not only on being able to deliver own-source revenue from this partnership, but also employment opportunities for our community.

Muscowpetung Transdev

Finally, we are also excited to announce the formalization of a partnership with Transdev Canada, signed at the beginning of this month. Together we have created Muscowpetung Transdev, a partnership that will provide bussing and transportation services across the province. Muscowpetung Transdev has already bid to provide the Paratransit Services for the City of Regina and we have begun engaging our other industry partners to explore additional revenue opportunities. Additionally, you may have seen a post on the Nation's community Facebook page with several new employment opportunities that Transdev is seeking to fill. We are excited to be bringing these roles to the community and look forward to many more to come.

L-R: The homelands of Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation, a rendering of a new 3D "Entering Muscowpetung" sign with Saulteaux syllabics, Community Plan Report (now available online at www.muscowpetung.com), rendering of the new MSBD Business Hub proposed for the Rail Yards in downtown Regina, a future rendering of Muscowpetung's Store Skunk's Corner.

Kian Poitras: Representing Muscowpetung with Pride

Story by Chris Tyrone Ross

At just 18 years old, Kian Poitras is already making Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation proud on the international stage.

Kian recently returned home after representing Team Canada at the U18 Men's Pan American Championship in Argentina. Competing against some of the top young fastball players in the world, he was also there to resprent his home community Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation.

"I still look back on it today and it's hard to believe," Kian shared. "How far I came, the dedication and work I put in. I feel a huge sense of pride and gratefulness for my community and my family."

His path to Team Canada began last summer at the Canada Summer Games in Newfoundland. After a strong performance there, Kian started gaining attention from coaches and scouts. Shortly after, he received a call from a Team Canada coach inviting him to join the national program, it was a moment he describes as both exciting and surreal.

In Argentina, Team Canada battled through tough competition with heart and determination. While the tournament challenged the team, Kian says the bonds formed and the experience meant the most.

"We had a good group of guys and we glued together pretty quickly. It's something I'll remember for the rest of my life." said Kian.

For Kian, representing Canada was an honour — but representing Muscowpetung made it even more meaningful.

"It's an unreal feeling," he said. "To represent not only Canada but my Nation — it means a lot."

Baseball has always been part of Kian's life. Growing up around the diamonds, he watched his father play and developed a love for the game at a young age. What started as childhood admiration grew into a dream that he worked tirelessly to pursue.

"My dad was a pretty good ball player. It's always been a part of my life, and it's always what I wanted to do."

That strong family foundation continues to guide him today.

Now back in Regina, Kian is balancing

“I’d just like to thank my family for supporting me my whole ball career. I don’t know where I’d be without them.”

athletics with academics. He is currently studying kinesiology at the University of Regina, learning about physical performance, training, and overall health. He believes his education will not only prepare him for the future but also strengthen his development as an athlete.

As he prepares for the upcoming season, Kian and his family are carefully weighing several opportunities. He has received interest from teams in Ontario and Saskatchewan, and discussions are ongoing about which path will best support both his athletic and educational goals.

“It’s exciting! We’re just discussing options and seeing what’s going to work best for me”, said Poitras.

Despite the recognition and opportunities, Kian remains humble and grounded. When asked if he had any final message for the community, he wanted to express his gratitude to the nation.

“I’d just like to thank my family for supporting me my whole ball career, I don’t know where I’d be without them. I’d like to thank my community for helping and supporting me throughout my youth sports.”

Kian’s journey from Muscowpetung to the international stage is a powerful reminder of what dedication, family support, and community pride can achieve. As the Nation celebrates his accomplishments, one thing is certain — this is only the beginning.

URBAN UPDATE: ALBERTA

Muscowpetung members had a festive time of dinner and gifts at the annual Edmonton Urban Christmas Dinner

BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER THROUGH CULTURE AND CARE

Alberta members have had many conversations over the past few months about gatherings, obtaining status cards, affordable food, ribbon skirt making, application assistance for various services, and about our kids in care. We have gathered during Urban Update meetings and Christmas meals that brought us closer and learning more about each other. As we grow as a nation, we need to be mindful that everyone is in different stages of their lives, yet we can still feel the love of community each and every time we get together.

We have had an invite go out with our hunters in Alberta to join them for elk hunting. Some of our members introduced their new babies to our membership. We successfully transitioned a sibling group of three children from foster care into kinship care. Learning our culture is very important to all of our members, especially our language, we would like thank the hunters for offering this experience to all our members so we can pass it down to future generations to come. Currently, we are getting ready for workshops, teachings, storytelling, small groups, and more meals together. Any Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation Elders who would like to help out in any capacity, to pass down great knowledge to our eager-to-learn urban members, please contact an Urban Services Coordinator in your region. We are looking forward to all the amazing things to come in this new year. Stay blessed!

- Danielle Young, Urban Services Coordinator
  Edmonton & Calgary Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation 1-780-860-0669
  danielle.young@muscowpetung.com

URBAN UPDATE: SASKATCHEWAN

Muscowpetung members enjoyed an evening of dinner and presents at the annual Saskatoon Urban Christmas Dinner.

SASK URBAN SERVICES SUPPORTING FAMILIES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

We are pleased to announce that the Muscowpetung Urban Services Coordinator-Sask was able to assist ten of our families in receiving Christmas hampers this holiday season. This meaningful support was made possible through the generous efforts of the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Center and the Operation Santa initiative in Saskatoon, SK.

Thanks to these partnerships, families were able to enjoy a brighter and more joyful holiday. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Center and Operation Santa for their commitment to giving back to the community and ensuring that no family is left behind during this special time of year.

We look forward to continuing to work together to support and uplift our families in the years to come.

Other services we provide include help with status card applications, government IDs, birth certificates, and health card applications. We also assist with housing applications, offer mental health and addictions support, teen parent support, and facilitate cultural and community connections.

Courtney-Dawn Anaquod
Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation
Urban Coordinator SK
Urban Office 168 wall street,
Saskatoon, SK Office hours 8:30am-4:30pm
306-221-9446
courtney.anaquod@muscowpetung.com

URBAN UPDATE: BRITISH COLUMBIA

Muscowpetung urban members enjoyed many events and programming in and around British Columbia like hiking, berry piking and bonding.

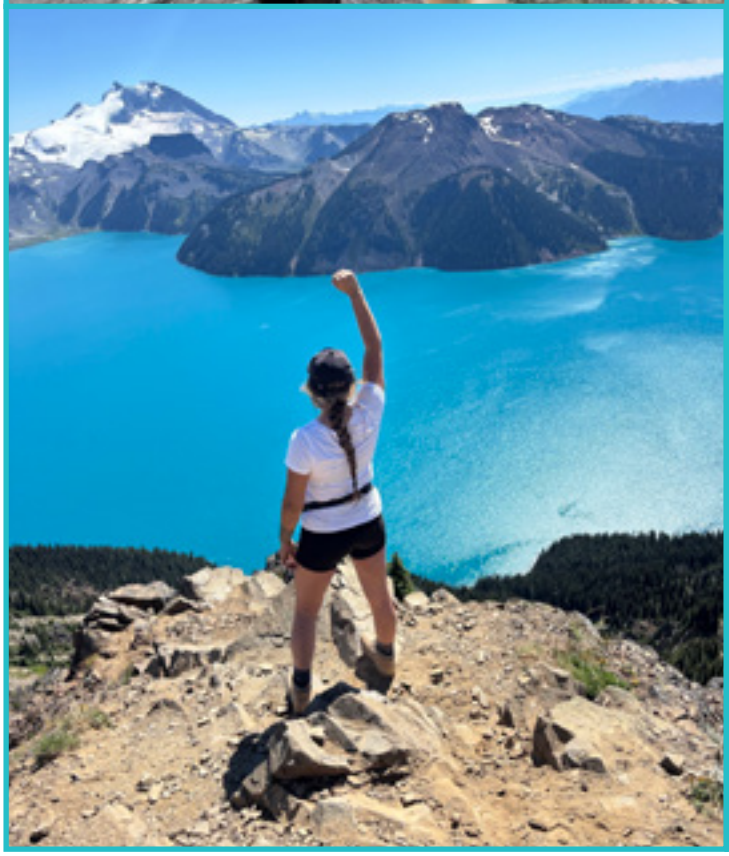
BUILDING CONNECTION FAR FROM HOME: A SUMMER OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY FOR BC MSN URBAN MEMBERS

Throughout the summer, our British Columbia Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation (BC MSN) urban members continued to create connection, build community, and come together for various programs and cultural practices. This summer, we hosted our first annual MSN Urban Flower Day Feast. It was a day filled with laughter, sharing, and teachings. This gathering gave our urban members who had not experienced a Flower Day Feast the opportunity to learn not only what a Flower Day Feast is, but also its traditional significance and the protocols passed on from generation to generation, building that connection back to the Nation.

When the Saskatoon berries were ripe for picking in Saskatchewan and our family members were finding their secret spots on the Nation, our urban members had the opportunity to harvest blueberries at University of British Columbia (UBC) Farm and learned to make traditional berry soup with their families. Despite being a distance from the Nation, this experience connected our members back to culture and the land. We would like to send our gratitude to UBC Farm for sharing their space and giving us the opportunity to come together.

We also had time to fit in one more program for our urban youth: the Walking on the Land: Askiy-pimatisiwin Urban Backpacking Program, in collaboration with the Fraser Regional Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA). This amazing opportunity included four two-hour workshops that covered the essentials of outdoor safety and responsibility, gear, food and water preparation, mental health and wellness, and Indigenous stewardship. Once confidence was built and the backpacks were packed, we were ready for our two-day outdoor adventure in Garibaldi Provincial Park, located one hour outside of Vancouver, BC.

URBAN UPDATE: BRITISH COLUMBIA



We took five MSN youth and five FRAFCA youth. They not only got to practice what they learned in the outdoor workshops, but also had the opportunity to learn about themselves and discover perseverance they didn't know they had. After hiking over 50 kilometers in two days, I would like to send a huge congratulations to our MSN youth: Marissa Cappo, Kali Cappo, Kaden Cappo, Danu Episkinew, and Haily Flett, who took on this challenge. Thank you to FRAFCA for providing the gear, food, and transportation.

Kinanaskomitin (Thank you, I am grateful to you),

Lyndel Cappo
Muscowpetung Urban Service Coordinator-Vancouver
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PHOTO BY CURTIS CAMERON

PREVENTION REPORT: STANDING UP FOR MUSCOWPETUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

My name is Sherri Gordon, and I serve as the First Nations Representative for Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation. My role is to support children, families, and community members as they navigate the child welfare system, and to ensure the Nation's voice is present wherever decisions are being made about our children and families. I attend court weekly on matters involving children of the Nation, advocating for family and kinship placements, meaningful Nation involvement and culturally appropriate outcomes. These processes are often long and complex, and my role is to provide consistent advocacy over time. Recently, I supported the reunification of three siblings who were removed from a long-term foster placement and placed with family, allowing them to spend their first Christmas with family in many years. Beyond court, I work directly with families, caregivers, and agencies to help children in care remain connected to the Nation, their culture, and their community. This has included inviting children in care to Christmas dinners across Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Vancouver, supporting a welcoming ceremony during last summer's powwow, and planning to bring more children home for August ceremonies this year.

I have experience across prevention and protection services and carry out my work in accordance with Bill C-92 and Orders of Care, supporting family-based decision-making and the best interests of our children. I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Human Justice, completed my practicum with Correctional Service Canada in urban parole, and am a Certified Independent Gladue Writer (since 2023). I also serve as a Community Collaborator Member with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, an Associate Member of the Canadian Prison Law Association, and an appointed board member and Human Justice and Prisoner Rights Advocate with Handcuff Status Inc. I also volunteer with Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA), supporting reintegration and advocating for policy reform in corrections. This work led to my nomination for the Tallberg-SNF Eliasson Global Leadership Prize in 2025.

Sherri Gordon, B.A. Human Justice
First Nations Representative
Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation
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PUBLIC WORKS: FROM ROADS TO HOMES: PUBLIC WORKS KEEPS COMMUNITY SERVICES RUNNING STRONG

The Public Works Department had a busy and productive quarter helping the community grow, keeping infrastructure in good shape, and making sure roads stayed safe.

Some highlights from the quarter include completing inspections and maintenance on major equipment like the water truck, sewer truck, grader, loader, skid steer, and tractor. We also excavated five crawl spaces and five basements for tiny homes, along with excavation for two new building additions. Our team installed water tanks, replaced septic PVC piping and utility collars, and handled regular road repairs and general maintenance.

During the winter months, we cleared snow from main roads and municipal yards to keep travel safe. With colder temperatures, we also focused on elder home checkups to help with household tasks, while ensuring drinking water was easy to access. We are always available to answer and respond to emergency calls whenever they came in.

Looking ahead, we'll be planning early firefighting training in the next few weeks, meeting with our local town Fire Chief to go over emergency response plans and working through different firefighting scenarios so we are prepared for real emergencies. Overall, these efforts help keep services reliable, roads safe, and community projects moving forward. Public Works will keep doing the work to make sure everything runs smoothly year round.

Regards,

Laura Marion
Public Works Coordinator
Muscowpetung First Nation
Office: (306) 723-4747
Cellular: (639) 318-6202

HOUSING UPDATE: NEW HOMES, RENOVATIONS, PROJECTS MOVING FORWARD

Anin,

Our Housing Team is working diligently to bring more homes to the Nation. We are currently preparing an application for Build Canada Homes (BCH). This new federal agency is designed to build affordable housing at scale and works directly with First Nations communities to fund culturally appropriate housing models.

As of today, we are 50% complete on our Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Phase 12 project, which consists of four 5-bedroom units currently under construction in our subdivision. Completion is expected in spring 2026. We are also beginning the application process for CMHC Phase 13, where we will be applying for an additional two to five homes. We have completed two Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) renovations and are currently working on the application for the next round of CMHC RRAP funding.

Our Nation's Tiny Home Project, which includes five 1-bedroom Ready-to-Move (RTM) homes, is currently under construction. These homes will be centrally located in the valley, with completion expected in spring 2026.

We also have ongoing renovations through two different funding streams and working to maximize these funds to improve as many homes as possible:

The First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program Funding: Used for repairs to Band homes with children. (Note: CMHC homes are not eligible).

Immediate Needs Funding (Indigenous Services Canada - ISC): Used for major renovations based off our cyclical inspection reports on Band homes. (Note: CMHC homes are not eligible.)

Our Housing Maintenance Team is always on the go, handling both major and minor renovations and repairs, mold remediation, pest control, material pick-ups, home inspections, and appliance checks.

We go by a "Maintenance Request Form" and requests are completed in the order they are received or based on urgency. Please call the Housing Department for all requests or inquiries or stop by the office. For housing emergencies, contact us immediately so we can address the issue as quickly as possible.

Miigwetch,
Housing Department

MUSCOWPETUNG HEALTH CENTER UPDATE: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY WELLNESS THROUGH HOLISTIC, CULTURALLY GROUNDED CARE

The Muscowpetung Health Center plays a vital role in supporting the overall wellness of the community through a wide range of culturally grounded, holistic health programs for individuals and families of all ages.

Our Community Health Nurse provides essential services that promote health across all life stages. These services include immunizations to protect against preventable illnesses, comprehensive prenatal care for expectant mothers, and postnatal support to assist families during the transition after childbirth. Through education, regular health check-ups, and compassionate care, families receive the guidance and support they need to ensure a healthy start for both parents and children.

The Wellness Coordinator leads a variety of ongoing programs designed to strengthen physical, emotional, and social well-being. These include wellness days, talking circles, and weekly Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings, which offer safe and supportive spaces for individuals on their recovery journey. Additional programming such as sewing classes and grief support sessions encourages creativity, healing, and peer connection in a respectful and understanding environment.

Each month, the Health Center hosts a Community Wellness Day, coordinated by the Community Health Representative and Parent Mentor. These events focus on prevention and education and include diabetes management information, health screenings, complimentary diabetic pedicures, and nutritious meals. Participants also receive small wellness gifts to encourage continued healthy living. Monthly prenatal and postnatal cooking classes further support families by teaching nutritious meal preparation while strengthening community connections through shared learning.

In November, the Health Center proudly hosted National Addictions Awareness Week, bringing together community members of all ages through meaningful and engaging activities. Events included a school smudge walk involving 81 students and staff, a substance-free dry dance with live music, a self-care wellness day, and a well-attended round dance with 337 participants. These events highlighted the importance of culture, connection, and community support in addiction awareness and recovery.

Looking ahead, the Muscowpetung Health Center will continue offering year-round wellness programming. Upcoming initiatives include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) workshops facilitated by the Community Parent Mentor and Community Health Nurse, Good Food Box distributions for prenatal and postnatal clients, Christmas food hampers for households, and family Christmas craft nights in collaboration with the Prevention team.

The Muscowpetung Health Center thanks the community for its continued support and participation and remains committed to working together toward a healthier future for all.

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EMPOWERING FUTURES: EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT EXPANDS SUPPORTS, LAUNCHES ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM, AND CELEBRATES CLIENT SUCCESSES

The Employment and Training Department is dedicated to supporting individuals in achieving their career goals by providing comprehensive employment services tailored to the diverse needs of our community. Our team works closely with clients to assess their strengths, interests, and barriers to employment, ensuring that each person receives individualized support. Our mission is to empower our IA clients to effectively job seek through personalized guidance, skill development, and employment opportunities, helping them secure long-term, sustainable careers. We strive to create a welcoming environment where clients feel encouraged and supported throughout their journey, offering resources that build confidence and foster independence. Through partnerships with employers, training providers, and other community organizations, we aim to open doors to new opportunities and help our clients build brighter futures.

What We Do

We offer a broad range of services designed to address every stage of the employment journey:
Career counseling and job search support: We help clients identify their goals, explore career options, and develop effective job search strategies.
Resume and cover letter assistance: Our staff provide hands-on help in creating professional, tailored application documents that highlight clients' unique skills and Experiences.
Interview preparation and coaching: We offer mock interviews, feedback, and tips to build confidence and improve performance in job interviews.
Job matching and placement services: We connect clients with opportunities that fit their skills and interests, and facilitate introductions to local employers.
Ongoing support and aftercare to help clients maintain employment: Our team continues to provide advice and assistanceafter job placement, helping clients address workplace challenges and build long-term stability.

Workshops and skills training programs: We regularly host training sessions on a variety of topics, from technical skills to workplace communication and financial literacy, giving clients the tools to succeed in a dynamic job market.

Collaborative Support for Clients with Active Addictions:

Recognizing that some clients face challenges related to addiction, we have established a close working relationship with our Health Department team. When a client discloses or is identified as experiencing active addiction, our staff initiate a compassionate, confidential conversation to understand their needs and readiness for support. With the client's consent, we make referrals to specialized addiction services available in the vicinity, including counseling, detoxification programs, and culturally relevant healing initiatives.

Our team along with our Health Services dept. helps facilitate the referral process, provides information about available resources, and, when needed, assists with appointment scheduling and transportation. Throughout this process, we maintain ongoing communication with the Health Department to ensure continuity of care and access to available services. By integrating employment supports with addiction services, we address barriers to employment holistically, helping clients move toward stability, wellness, and long-term self-sufficiency.

Department Goals

- Increase employment rates among our clients by providing customized support and access to job opportunities.
- Foster tong-term career growth and advancement by encouraging continuous learning and skill development.
- Build strong relationships with local employers to create a robust network of job placements and industry connections for our clients.
- Continuously improve our services to meet changing workforce needs by seeking feedback, adapting programming, and staying current with labor market trends.
- Promote self-sufficiency and independence, empowering clients to take control of their career paths and achieve personal and professional milestones

Upcoming Programs for Employment and Training & Income Assistance Clients

Essential Skills/Life Skills Program
Program Dates: March 2, 2026 — March 27, 2026

This program focuses on developing the core skills needed for personal and professional success. Participants will engage in training that covers communication, problem-solving, teamwork, financial literacy, and other life skills crucial for maintaining employment and achieving self-reliance.

Goals & Intent

- Strengthen essential workplace and life skills
- Support clients in becoming job-ready and self-sufficient
- Encourage positive habits for sustained employment
- Prepare clients to adapt and thrive in changing work environments

Programs are tailored for Employment and Training and Income Assistance clients, aiming to empower participants for meaningful, lasting employment and greater independence.

Recent Achievements

Since January 5, 2026, the Employment and Training Department has assisted 7 clients in securing pre employment support through funding and maintaining full-time employment. Our team provided hands-on support throughout their job search and continues to offer resources to ensure their ongoing success in the workplace. We remain committed to helping more individuals reach their employment objectives and will continue to expand our services to meet the evolving needs of our community.

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"SITTING STRONG"
Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation's Community Newsletter

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