

**WINTER 2020** 

# MAMUW OBIKI-AHWAHSOOWIN

EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN



THE WAY TO GET TO KNOW KIDS IN PIKANGIKUM IS TO EARN THEIR TRUST.

WHYDERMAN BLACK, DIRECT SERVICES SUPERVISOR BASED IN PIKANGIKUM

### **OUR MODEL**

Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin is the Tikinagan service model. In Ojibway/Oji-Cree, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin means, "Everyone working together to raise our children." It is a system of protecting and caring for children and supporting families that has been designed and is delivered by First Nations people.

### **OUR VISION**

The Creator entrusted First
Nations with the sacred
responsibility of protecting our
children and developing strong
families and healthy
communities. The Chiefs
created Tikinagan to support
and strengthen our children,
our families, and our
communities. The future of our
communities is our children.

### TIKINAGAN.ORG

For more information, career opportunities, or to become a Foster Parent, visit tikinagan.org.

# BUILDING ON TRUST IN PIKANGIKUM

Trust is one of the nine core values at Tikinagan Child & Family Services, and in Pikangikum First Nations it is one of the foundations in strengthening community relationships.

"The way to get to know kids in Pikangikum is to earn their trust and spend time with them in order to get to know them and in order to work with them," says Whyderman Black, Direct Services Supervisor based in Pikangikum, adding that this same approach applies when working with families in the community, including extended family members.

"We get along with (families) pretty well," says Black.

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# I KNOW TIKINAGAN IS THERE TO HELP OUR FAMILIES

PIKANGIKUM BAND COUNCIL MEMBER SUSAN D. STRANG



Pikangikum Band Council Member, Susan D. Strang, speaking in Ojibway, is thankful for the work Tikinagan has done for her community's children and families, including hiring staff who live in Pikangikum.

"I know Tikinagan is there to help our families and not take the children away," says Strang. "We make mistakes with our children and Tikinagan is there to try and help us on how to keep our children."

Tikinagan understands that trust is essential to building effective relationships and we know that it must be earned through consistency and dependability. Like our efforts in Pikangikum, the largest of 30 First Nations communities we serve with a population of more than 2,500, Tikinagan is committed to being trustworthy in fulfilling the responsibilities inherent in our mandate as a First Nations child well-being organization.

Black highlights recent events Tikinagan hosted in the community, such as their annual Fall and Christmas feasts, has helped families get more involved. In addition, Tikinagan hosted two Meet & Greet events in the community (one in the summer and another in November), providing staff and the community the opportunity to connect, as well as promote current job opportunities in the community.

"I think the community is more anxious to get involved, to get to know Tikinagan," says Black. "They see that Tikinagan is trying to help them out."

Black notes that Pikangikum sees his community as an organization that works together with others in the community. Involvement in community and cultural events are a key part of Tikinagan's service model, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin (in Ojibway/Oji-Cree, it means, "everybody working together to raise our children"). Having community-based staff and believing the answers lie within each community are also important to the success of Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin.

Black regularly encourages his team of nine staff to work closely with families by talking to them and getting to know their culture so they can build the trust. He says one priority in the community is the language. Currently, Black believes about half of the youth in the community speak Ojibway. One way Tikinagan supports this effort with families is by having staff speak the language.

Along with Black, the Pikangikum-based staff include Sonny Suggashie, Office Administrator; Case Aid Workers Shanda Quill, Michael Owen,

and Philip Pascal; and Family Service Workers Robert Quill, Justin Suggashie, June McNally, Alicia Brown, and Santana King.

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It's another cold November evening in Deer Lake First Nation, and when most of the community has finished work for the day, the staff at Tikinagan Child and Family Services are returning from an airport run – well past five o'clock.

The team of six community-based workers are all helping unload more than a dozen boxes from the truck with smiles on their faces. Tomorrow, they will prepare food at the community school to feed more than 100 people for the annual fall feast, hosted by Tikinagan.

This is just one of the ways Tikinagan supports children and families in the community they work in. Tikinagan and its staff are a part of the community.

Involvement and support for community and cultural events are a key part of Tikinagan's service model, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin (in Ojibway/Oji-Cree, it means, "everybody working together to raise our children"). Having community-based staff and believing the answers lie within each community are also important to the success of Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin.

Darren Rae, a Tikinagan Direct Service Supervisor in Deer Lake and staff member for almost six years, says his staff follow the model and its mandate to provide culturally appropriate services in his community of more than 1,200 people.

"We look to Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin as a guide," says Rae. "Each community is unique and different, but that shouldn't deter on how we perceive Aboriginal values and the delivery of the service mode."

While Tikinagan is known as the child and family agency in Deer Lake, they are so much more. The team serves the community during special events that brings people together and celebrates their culture, such as Canada Day and Aboriginal Day. They also plan and provide year-round activities for youth. Last month, Tikinagan booked the arena for a community dance, and in two weeks, it will participate in the school's career fair.

Kasenda Meekis, Tikinagan Child Care Worker in Deer Lake, believes her community sees Tikinagan as an organization that wants to help families and children.

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"Deer Lake loves to acknowledge our culture," says Meekis. "I think that Tikinagan is helping with that a lot by introducing more ways for youth to be involved."

"They also see our staff as involved in the community," she

Tikinagan full-time community-based staff in Deer Lake in Deer Lake, include Rae and Meekis as well as Cory Meekis, Direct Services Supervisor; Yzerman Kakegamic, Prevention Services Coordinator; Tritney Goodman, Family Services Worker; and Sonia Meekis, Receptionist. Rae regularly reminds them of Tikinagan's vision and their purpose in Deer Lake.

"Not all rewards are in the physical form, but what Tikinagan represents is giving these families a sense of security, hope, and ambition for a brighter future," says

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Tikinagan Presents: Little Bands Highlights Video 2020





# WATCH OUR STORIES IN ACTION!



Working at Tikinagan

**BUTCH MAGASHAZI**