

# Annual Report **2015-2016**



Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin

Everyone working together to raise our children

www.tikinagan.org



#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

@ March 31, 2016

# ⊳CVT∂,

@ ΓΡΥΔ·ΛΥς 31, 2016

#### Officers

Lorraine Crane, Chairperson Archie Meekis, Co-Chair Russell Kakepetum, Secretary-Treasurer

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#### **Directors**

Jim Bottle, Board Member Sonny Gagnon, Board Member Donald Dean Ross, Board Member

#### **⊳CVCT∂**,

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#### **ELDERS COUNCIL**

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# OUR SERVICE MODEL - MAMOW OBIKI-AHWAHSOOWIN

In Tikinagan's efforts to provide culturally appropriate services, Tikinagan has developed very different service delivery procedures and policies than mainstream Children's Aid Societies. The vision, goal and principles established by the Chiefs for Tikinagan have been fully integrated with Aboriginal values and service delivery policies and procedures into a unique Native service model for the agency called Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, which means "everyone working together to raise our children." It is a system of protecting and caring for children and supporting families, which has been designed and is delivered by First Nations people. The Chiefs of this area have endorsed Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin and authorized the agency to use this model to deliver child welfare services.

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Children always come first and I believe our management team here understands that in all the work we do.

Lorraine Crane board chairperson

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#### **Guided by Our Past**

It was about 32 years ago when the Chiefs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Government of Ontario signed an agreement to move toward full First Nations' control over child welfare services. Tikinagan Child and Family Services was incorporated that year and was founded on two basic principles: "that no more children be lost from our communities" and "that a child and family service agency be created that would work with the people, for the people, while respecting culture, heritage and the concepts of the extended family."

As we grew over the years, these founding principles have always been honoured. In fact, they were the basis of our service model: Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin (everyone working together to raise our children). These principles are in everything we do here at Tikinagan - we are forever grounded by our past.

I'd like to take this time, as I think of the wisdom of our traditional teachings, to thank the Elders Council for their work this year. They are truly an asset to the Board of Directors and we look to them for their guidance and words of encouragement. Our Elders are our connection to the past and their wisdom comes from their experience.

#### Children First, Always

This past year, we have seen continued growth here at Tikinagan. Our Executive Director, Thelma Morris, has overseen this growth and I am thankful for her skills and knowledge. Ms. Morris has the culture and

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background, and more importantly is not afraid to share her personal experience. I think this is what makes a true leader, when one can apply their experience and have a personal connection to the communities and families we serve.

There's always a reason why people are in the roles they are in now, especially regarding kids and children. Children always come first, and I believe that our management team here understands that in all of the work we do.

This is what makes, and will continue to make, a strong First Nations' agency that truly supports children and families. Tikinagan, and more importantly the families we serve, will see healthy and happy children if we keep connecting to those founding principles and connect them to these three words: children first, always.

#### **Looking to the Future**

Two years ago, I witnessed our employees participating in a staff retreat, where they were cooking outside and connecting with the land. This is something that still stands out in my mind and it really demonstrated how Tikinagan uses traditional teachings and values to support employees and the work they do. More importantly, it made me see how important it is to remember that the answers are at home - we don't need to look outside of the community for an answer or a solution.

I can see this in not just our services we offer directly to the communities and families we serve, but in the partnerships we nurture with other organizations who are here to also serve our families and children. When families and children from our communities reside in other districts, we want to ensure they get culturally appropriate services. They may be separated by miles from their traditional lands, but we want them to know that we are still there for them. They are still connected to their traditional roots.

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Tikinagan has such a strong history, built on our traditions of customary care while we protect children and help families. But we also have a bright future, where our services are unique and innovative compared to mainstream child and family services.

In closing, I'd like to reflect on the idea of using the past as a tool, a stepping stone, to move forward and not be afraid of the changing times. Every family and every generation brings different needs when it comes to how their family unit functions. Technology, infrastructure and how a community operates means there are different needs to be met and we need to change with the times to provide appropriate services. Just as it's so important to follow Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin and honour our traditions, it's just as important to grow and change alongside of the communities and families we serve.





As of August 2016, it will have been my first full year here as Executive Director. Not only do I want to thank the management for their hard work and support this year, but I want to thank the Board of Directors and Elders Council for their guidance.

Over the months that I stepped into this role, the Board has given me such support and confidence to do the job that they've hired me to do. The Elders have always been, whether in board meetings or when we just speak casually, a source of spiritual support and guidance. They impart traditional teachings and I have listened and learned from them.

#### Commitment

In my day-to-day work, I don't often get the chance to show my appreciation for our staff and the dedication they show to helping families and protecting children through Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin. This is my opportunity to put a spotlight on them and say thank you.

This is also the opportunity to recognize that this year we had two more employees celebrate their 25 year anniversary here at Tikinagan. Congratulations to Marlene Boos and Marie Hudson! Additionally, congratulations to all employees who have hit a milestone this year. Whether the milestone is five years, 10 years or 25 years, it's always inspiring and reassuring to know that our staff is committed to the challenging yet rewarding work we do at Tikinagan.

In my day-to-day work I don't often get the chance to show my appreciation for our staff and the dedication they show to helping families and protecting children through Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin. This is my opportunity to put a spotlight on them and say thank you.

Thelma Morris executive director

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We also appreciate the support provided by communities. Our staff can remain committed when we have community representatives who are supportive and committed to Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin in our day-to-day work. Tikinagan employees have very challenging work at times and when leadership and community members are supportive it truly helps us serve you better.

#### Collaboration

What stood out to me most this year, in my role, is the collaborative approach we've adopted with working with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the province of Ontario. We're taking on a larger role in ownership of how we as First Nations want to see Tikinagan run. Not only through governance, but in the way our management works with funders. In this collaboration, it really goes hand-in-hand with how we work with the communities we serve. Tikinagan is a partner with each First Nation community and we honour this in every aspect of our work.

Speaking of collaboration, I want to take the time to thank Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services (KRR) for working with us as we signed agreements to ensure that children and families from our First Nation catchment residing in Dryden, Ear Falls, Red Lake and most recently Kenora, receive services from Tikinagan. We appreciate that KRR recognizes the importance of culturally appropriate services and we look forward to our continued, collaborative relationship with them.

#### **Connected to Community**

We continue to be committed to the First Nations families living in the communities we serve, but more than ever we need families to know that we are there for them wherever they move. Just as other agencies we work with understand the importance of culturally appropriate services when it comes to helping families and protecting children, we are working towards a more seamless collaboration with more agencies to ensure our families stay connected to their First Nation communities.

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More and more families choose to reside off-reserve and we strive to connect them to their culture and communities through use of the Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin model. It was designed by First Nations, honours traditional values and customary care practices, and recognizes the inherent right of First Nations over their families wherever they reside. I believe community extends beyond property lines. Tikinagan strives to meet the needs of our families and ensure they stay connected to their values- to our values.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I'm looking forward to this year ahead and want to thank the leadership of the First Nation communities we serve for their support and confidence in Tikinagan. We acknowledge their belief in the Mamow Obikiahwahsoowin service model, because it's their model and it's a model that comes from the communities we serve. Meegwetch!

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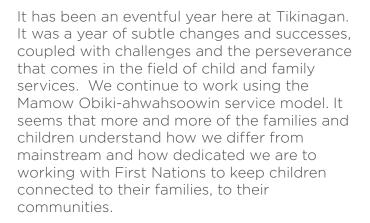




Rachel Meekis director of services

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Judy Angeconeb accepted the position of Assistant Director of Services on October 26, 2015, after completing an initial six-month acting term in the newly created position. We welcome her addition to the Senior Management team, as she is an asset to the agency with over 28 years of experience with the agency.

We made changes to the structure to better respond to the needs of the communities (specifically Pikangikum, Poplar Hill, Sandy Lake, North Spirit Lake, Deer Lake, Fort Severn and Red Lake). We also combined the two office locations as the Red Lake/Poplar Hill unit and Pikangikum unit moved into one office in Red Lake. The Service Managers are trying to create a team atmosphere between the units. Staff took time to adjust to the office move, but they believe this was a great decision to house both units in one office for the long run.



Judy Angeconeb assistant director of services

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We moved forward with service agreements in other jurisdictions to ensure families from the First Nation communities in our catchment receive culturally-appropriate services through Tikinagan. In February, we signed an agreement with Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services (KRR) to provide our services in the Kenora area.

This means we now have agreements in place to provide services to off-reserve families in Dryden, Ear Falls, Ignace, Kenora, Red Lake and Sioux Lookout. This also means we are able to recruit Aboriginal foster families in all of these urban areas, which is important as we want to ensure that if a child needs a foster home they aren't removed from a town where they have family connections. Recruitment continues and we are working on new campaigns and initiatives to attract new foster homes.

#### **Children in Care**

Over the last five years, we have seen a steady decline in the number of children in care. At the end of this year we had 547 children in care, compared to 576 the year before and 605 the year before that. That's significant when we compare those numbers to 2011 when the year ended with 632 children in care.

At the same time, while the overall number has decreased, the age of children in care seems to be rising. We now see more youth and high-risk teenagers in care. This is a definite challenge, as it can be harder to find homes in the First Nation communities for high-risk youth. This will be something we need to address and hope we can work with the leadership to help our teenagers and ensure they stay connected to their families and communities during what can be a tumultuous time in their lives.

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## **Intake and Family Services**

We've had a significant increase in investigations this year. We had 207 cases open at the beginning of the year (compared to 153 last year) and 1,075 cases served during the year (compared to 861 last year).

It should be noted that our caseload increased this year as we signed the service agreement with KRR. This explains the increase in investigations. Another factor for the increase is that we believe more people are approaching Tikinagan with concerns for children - which we think demonstrates more people are becoming aware of our services and know that we are here to help.

#### **Residential Services**

We made some minor structural changes for residential services at the management level. With this, we hope to expand the programming and put more focus on supports and training in the Agency Operated Homes (AOHs) so that we can begin to transition children home from southern Ontario treatment centres and keep children from leaving our jurisdiction for treatment.

At the beginning of the year, we had 371 Foster Homes. During the year, 128 new homes were approved and 90 homes were closed. We also continue to operate two youth healing centres in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug and Cat Lake.

Last year, we had 10 AOHs. This year, we opened new AOHs in Sioux Lookout, Lac Seul, and Sachigo. We now have 15 AOHs, which includes two vacant homes in Sioux Lookout in the process of being developed into housing for transitional-aged youth over the age of 18.

Our AOHs all have unique, wildlife-theme names; such as the Lynx Lodge in Aroland or the Eagle House in Eabametoong. This last year, we renamed one of our homes in Sioux Lookout to Rena's House. Rena Wesley was a Live-in Foster Parent who sadly passed away last year and we wanted to honour her memory. She was a kind and committed woman who will be greatly missed by many.

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#### **Training and Development**

Tikinagan continues to ensure all staff is trained in child welfare and our culturally-based service model. Each staff member who helps support children, families and communities are required to take Foundations of Child Welfare Professional Training (CWPT) and Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin Training. CWPT is an eight-module program that staff must complete to become authorized protection workers.

In addition to both of our foundation courses, staff also took training sessions including: Emergency and Standard First Aid, Counselling Skills, Safe Food Handling, Working with High-Risk Infants & Their Families, Emotional Harm of Children in High-Conflict Divorce, Leadership and Supervisor training, Assessing Parenting Capacity, and a FASD Conference for Caregivers/Foster Parents.

In March 2016, we celebrated 11 employees graduating from a two-year certificate program entitled Chemical Addictions Worker. The program was a first-time partnership with Tikinagan and Nicola Valley Institute of Technology out of British Columbia. The 10-course, 30-credit certificate program involved great commitment from the employees, who would dedicate a full week, every three to four months, working on the course-load. The graduates were from Cat Lake, Kitchenuhmaykossib Inninuwug and Lac Seul First Nation.

On June 9 - 11, 2015 we held a Children's Services Conference in Lac Seul First Nation which was attended by Child Care Workers and frontline Direct Services Supervisors. There were close to 100 workers who participated in this event. The theme of the conference was "What if this was my Child?" The three-day training conference helped workers enhance skills and knowledge to ensure that we provide efficient support. Also, changes to child care policies, procedures and forms were introduced and explained.

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The main purpose of the conference was to ensure workers realized that children in care deserve a safe and nurturing environment where they can be connected to family and extended family, their home community and their culture. They are not just client case numbers or files. They are children and youth who are in need of Tikinagan's services to help them not only overcome the challenges they face, but to thrive and reach their full potential. Using Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, Child Care Workers play a key role in achieving this for children in care.

## **Moving Forward**

We're looking forward to the year ahead. We will continue supporting our employees through training and development. We will continue ensuring our structure is sound so that our services are appropriate and we are able to respond to the needs of our communities. We will continue working in line with Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin - helping our families and children be strong, whole and healthy. Thank you to the leadership of the First Nations for your continued support and guidance.

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**Above:** Our Red Lake location held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in February to celebrate the opening of the new office. The first Red Lake office opened in 2002 and due to growth over the years there were two locations by 2012. It took over five years to find a suitable location which would be large enough to house approximately 35 staff working out of Red Lake. This office serves the First Nations of Pikangikum, Poplar Hill, McDowell Lake, and the Aboriginal population of Red Lake, Ear Falls and surrounding area.

**Bottom, left:** In February, Tikinagan signed an agreement with Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services (KRR) to provide our services in Kenora. Pictured: KRR Executive Director Bill Leonard shakes hands with Tikinagan's Director of Services Rachel Meekis after the signing ceremony.

**Bottom, right:** The Child Care Worker Conference was held in June 2015 and featured several workshops and content around the theme of "What if this was your child?" The three-day conference was attended by almost 100 employees and focused on enhancing workers' skills and knowledge to ensure that we provide efficient support. Pictured: Tikinagan employees watch as children from Lac Seul First Nation put on a concert on the last day of the conference.

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# **Investigations**

Number of child-protection investigations:

- open at beginning of year 207 (156 five-year average)
- opened during the year 714 (662 five-year average)
- re-opened during the year 154 (108 five-year average)
- served during the year 1,075 (926 five-year average)

# **Ongoing Service**

- **794** Ongoing services cases open at beginning of the year (889 five-year average)
- **787** Ongoing services cases open at the end of the year (862 five-year average)



# **Foster Homes**

- homes available at beginning of year (401 five-year average)
- 106 new homes approved during year
- 90 homes closed during year
- 387 homes open at end of year
- Foster Home studies 128 completed during the year (131 five-year average)

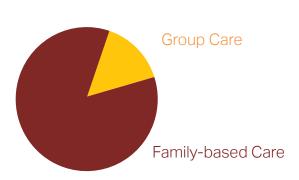


## **Children in Care**

- **576** Total children in care at beginning of year (618 five-year average)
- **547** Total children in care at the end of the year (606 five-year average)



This last year, there were 479 children 547 under Mamow Care, out of 547 Children in Care, which is 88% \*Other (includes crown wardship, continued care youth services and renewed youth support)



**Total Days in Care** 

**219,072** Five-year average = 225,134

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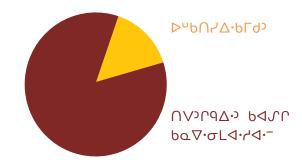
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#### **Statement of Child Welfare Fund**

#### Operations 2015/16

Operating Revenue	2015/16	2014/15
Child Welfare	\$ 50,904,758	\$ 50,040,282
Other	\$ 3,171,835	\$ 2,411,140
Total	\$ 54,076,593	\$ 52,451,422
Operating Expenses	2015/16	2014/15
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 17,033,707	\$ 15,867,173
Boarding & Client Services	\$ 31,140,862	\$ 31,083,006
Administration	\$ 6,370,884	\$ 6,072,387
Total	\$ 54,545,453	\$ 53,022,566
Fund Balances, beginning of year	\$ (4,019,005)	\$ (3,447,861)
(Deficit) Surplus for the year	\$ (473,788)	\$ (571,144)
Fund Balances, end of year	\$ (4,492,793)	\$ (4,019,005)

A summary from Schedule 1 - Statement of Revenue and Expenses - Child Welfare - audited by Meyers Norris Penny LLP, Chartered Accountants

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$\Box \Delta \Box \Box$	\$ 50,904,758	\$ 50,040,282	
dCbh, dqo,	\$ 3,171,835	\$ 2,411,140	
LL° bPA74'	\$ 54,076,593	\$ 52,451,422	

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	\$ 17,033,707	\$ 15,867,173
$P \wedge A \cdot $	\$ 31,140,862	\$ 31,083,006
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LL° βρΔζζ,	\$ 54,545,453	\$ 53,022,566
♭ΡΔΦΛΡΥ', ♭◁σ LCPንU' ⊲"P (♭Ρ L٢Φ"Δ95σ√')	\$ (4,019,005)	\$ (3,447,861)
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Tikinagan Child and Family Services would like to recognize employees who have reached their 10th, 15th, 20th and 25th anniversary of employment with the agency in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Our thanks and congratulations go to the following employees for their many years of dedicated service to the families and children of this region.

10 years

Annie Anishinabie Teresa Angeconeb Rov Beardy Rachel Meekis Tracy Houtz Fllen Meekis Toni Vincent Robert Meawasige Catherine Strickland Emily Van Voris Brian Rae Dawn Gardhouse Wendy Baumbach Edna Quequish Nora Chisel Marion Kenny

#### 15 Years

Christine Stever
William J. Davis
Harry Suganaqueb
Frances Grieg
Deanna Mitchell
Dorrie Chisel

#### 20 Years

Mary McKay

#### 25 Years

Marie Hudson Marlene Boos Πραδ)  $44\cdot \mathcal{N}^{\circ}$  Γα  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  ΛΙΓΡ9Δ·)  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  ααdl)  $4 \sigma$  ραδα  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  10, 15, 20 Γα 25 C/  $4^{\circ}$  ρδργ  $4 \circ$  ρCL9 $4 \cdot 1^{\circ}$  7b· 2015-2016  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  7β·  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  σργ ααdlγ  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  4σραδα  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  Λογραδα  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  7ολ  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  δργ  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  Λυγραδια  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  Γα  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  7ολ  $1 \times 1^{\circ}$  7ολ

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www.tikinagan.org