QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Namebine Giizis (Sucker Moon)



Aanii kina wiya!

As we come to the end of the January–March quarter and approach the close of our fiscal year, we're taking a moment to look back at the progress and accomplishments achieved over these past few months. This quarter has been filled with meaningful work, steady momentum, and important milestones that reflect the dedication and involvement of our community. We're excited to share these highlights with you and celebrate the impact we've made together.

Check out some highlights from January - March 2026!

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EZHWEBAK

(WHAT'S HAPPENING)

ADMINISTRATION

New Staff

Chief Administration Officer
In February, we welcomed Patrick Cheechoo as the Chief Administration Officer! Patrick can be reached at cao@wlfn.com.

EDUCATION

New Staff

Education Support Worker - Special Education
In February, we welcomed back Chelsea Farmer from maternity leave! Chelsea can be reached at education.SpecEd2@wlfn.com.

Librarian Assistant
In January, we welcomed Kachina Reynish as the Librarian Assistant! Kachina can be reached at library.assistant@wlfn.com.

Early Childhood Educator Assistant
In March, we welcomed Ciarra McCormick as the Early Childhood Educator Assistant! Ciarra can be reached at ece4@wlfn.com.

The Education Programmer continues to support the community and students through a variety of meaningful initiatives, including March Break activities such as:

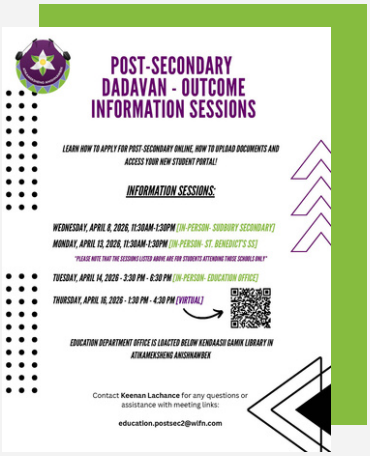


- Movie Day
- Winter Olympics
- Jeopardy Day

Ongoing programs include

- Snack and Homework Club
- School Lunch Market
  January: 50 participants, February: 20 participants, March: 30 participants

The Post-Secondary Worker has been hosting information sessions about the new Education Data System, **Outcomes SIS (Dadavan).** These sessions teach students how to apply for post-secondary education online, upload required documents, and access their new student portal on Dadavan.



Post-Secondary Funding Application Deadlines

Fall/Winter Terms (September - April): **Friday, May 8, 2026**

Winter Term (January - April): **Friday, October 9, 2026**

Apply for funding:

New Student Application

https://aafn.dadavan.com/student/pseapplication.jsp

Continuing or Previously Funded Students

https://aafn.dadavan.com/student/studentpage.jsp

Kendaasi - Gamik (Library)

Plans are underway at the Kendaasii-Gamik to create new signage that will make the collection easier to navigate for readers. We are also exploring ways to incorporate Anishinaabemowin into signage, particularly in areas such as the children's and teen sections. In addition, we aim to refresh the space by updating older posters and materials with new, engaging displays.

Literacy Day

The library hosted and collaborated with others in the Education department on a successful Literacy Day, bringing Debendaagziwaad together for a fun and engaging event. Activities included puppets and Storytime, with scone dogs served to help create a warm, welcoming, and enjoyable atmosphere for all attendees.



Waasakwa Children's Centre

The Waasakwa Children's Centre officially opened it's doors in February, welcoming children and familes into a safe, cullturally grounded, and high-quality early learning environment!

The Centre began operations with a licensed capacity for toddler, preschool, and school-age programs. Enrollment has been steadily increasing, with ongoing intake and waitlist management to support community demand. The Centre currently operates a toddler and preschool program, with school age commencing in the fall.










Enrollment is available for children of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek Band Members who reside on-reserve.

To request access to the enrollment link, please contact WaasakwaELC.manager@wlfn.com.

MINO BIMAADIZIWIN

New Staff

Anishinabe Aadziwin Worker

In January, we welcomed Justin Nootchtai as the Anishinaabe Aadziwin Worker! Justin can be reached at Anishinabe.aadziwin.worker2@wlfn.com.





The Mino Bimaadiziwin Department collaborated with the Social Services Department to host a Roots and Rising Youth Conference and Winter Round Dance on January 29 and 30.

During the Youth Conference, the Anishinaabemowin Helper created and hosted a Jeopardy-style game for the youth, testing their traditional knowledge and hometown awareness. Categories included Kokum Said, Da Bush, Rez Slang, Laughter is Medicine, and more.



The Round Dance area reached maximum capacity several times throughout the night. Mino Bimaadiziwin also created **seven** ribbon skirts and **five** ribbon shirts, which were used as prizes for spot dances during the Round Dance.

The Anishinabe Aadziwin Team has hosted ice fishing afternoons and evenings at various Atikameksheng water sources. The Ladies Ice Fishing event, held on March 12, was a memorable day filled with stories, laughter, and fresh air. Although there was no luck with fishing, everyone enjoyed the time spent together and the opportunity to be outdoors.





The Oshkaabewis team continues to bring in Traditional Healer's Mike Clark and Leanne Hennessy for Debendaagziwaad to meet for in-person visits. Upcoming visits will be **May 5 and 6, 2026.**

For more information or to book an appointment, please contact Brandon Petahtegoose at oshkaabewis@wlfn.com.

LANDS AND ENVIRONMENT

The Natural Resources Coordinator (NRC), Shannon Gonawabi, was the recipient of the **Innovation Award.** The award was presented on February 18, 2026, in Richmond, BC at the FNTAA/Alumni Event.

A video was also produced to honor this prestigious award, and the NRC was showcased for his accomplishment.



https://youtu.be/XTOhc9084Go

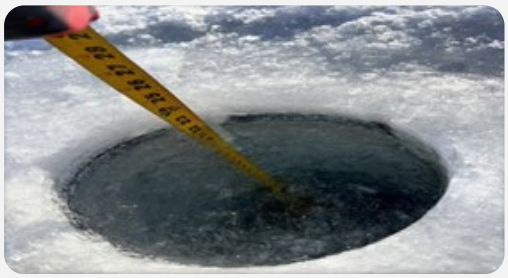
A total of two camp lot requests in the Makada Lake area were submitted and approved by Gimaa & Council. There was one camp lot in the Lake Panache area that was previously approved and required to be updated with proper coordinates.



This quarter, the Lands Guardians completed territory patrols across the Atikameksheng Reserve Area, including Round Lake, Makada Lake, Simon Lake, Whitefish Lake, Old Cartier Lake Road, and surrounding lake areas.

Guardians also carried out monthly site monitoring at the OPG Coniston and Stinson Hydro Dams and monitored ice conditions on lakes within reserve boundaries to support environmental oversight and community safety.

Water samples were collected through the ice from ten different bodies of water throughout the First Nation. Water samples were processed and shipped to the Ontario NatureMetrics laboratory for eDNA testing. Testing was done to determine the presence or absence of Blanding's Turtles, as well as several fish species, in each body of water. Results indicated that Blanding's Turtle DNA was not captured in any of the samples, but this does not necessarily mean the absence of Blanding's Turtles is certain.



HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

New Staff

Diner's Club Cook Assistant

In January, we welcomed Mercedes Roy as the Diner's Club Cook Assistant! Mercedes can be reached at dinersclub.helper@wlfn.com.

Adult Day Programmer

In January, we welcomed Kate Gobeil as the Adult Day Programmer! Kate can be reached at adultday.programmer@wlfn.com.

Community Wellness Program Worker

In January, we welcomed Tori Nootchtai as the Community Wellness Program Worker! Tori can be reached at communitywellness.worker@wlfn.com.

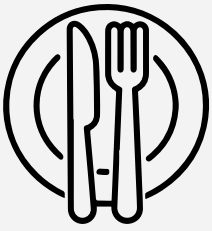


The Community Health Nurse partnered with Metamorphosis to host weekly seated yoga sessions at the Community Centre earlier this year.

The Community Wellness Program Worker develops and delivers community-based initiatives focused on holistic health, safety, and social connection!

- International Women's Day: **56** participants
- Easter Brunch: **124** attendees
- Bowling: **15** participants
- Supported **3** individuals weekly with socialization

This quarter, Diner's Club had an average of **72** participants. Diner's Club occurs every Wednesday, check out the Weekly Flyer to view the menu for Diner's Club!



Two Community Kitchen's were held during this quarter with **11** participants.

During this quarter, a total of

$6,009.00

was raised for the Elder's Trip!

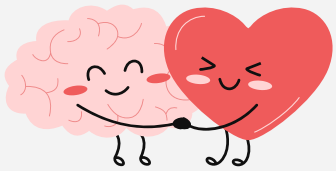
The Elders will be visiting British Columbia in May, and we're so excited for them. Wishing them a safe, memorable, and wonderful journey!

The Addictions Coordinator provides essential support to individuals navigating substance use and recovery.

- Aftercare Supports: **7** individuals
- Client Supports: **19** individuals
- Naloxone Training: **3** participants
- Anti-Gambling Presentation: **15** participants
- Peer Support Program Development: **19** participants



Join the Addictions Coordinator for the next Naloxone Training on May 14 at the Kendaasii-Gamik! For more information, contact addictions.coordinator@wlfn.com



The Mental Health Coordinator provides support, advocacy, and navigation services to individuals and families.

- Pink Shirt Day – **50** participants
- Client Supports – **30** individuals

The Family Violence Prevention Worker supports community wellness by providing inclusive, holistic services that strengthen Indigenous individuals, families, and relationships.

- Honoring Our Little Lights: **54** individuals (4 week program)
- Elder's Prom: **42** participants
- Hand Drum Making: **7** individuals
- Full Moon Ceremony: **20** individuals
- National Teen Dating Awareness: **4** individuals



The Outreach Workers are available at the Kendaasii-Gamik every Thursday from 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.! Stop in to visit them! Services they can provide include:

- Housing applications
- Assistance acquiring ID
- Referrals to internal/external supports
- Harm reduction supplies



Unable to visit the Outreach Workers on Thursday? Connect with them at outreach.worker@wlfn.com or outreach.worker2@wlfn.com

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

New Staff

Planning and Infrastructure Clerk

In March, we welcomed Riley McIntyre as the Planning and Infrastructure Clerk! Riley can be reached at planning-infra.clerk@wlfn.com.

On January 22, 2026, a Ground Breaking Ceremony was held for the new Bypass Road, **Wiijiiwaagan Miikana** (Friendship Road). The name was given by Melissa Levesque.

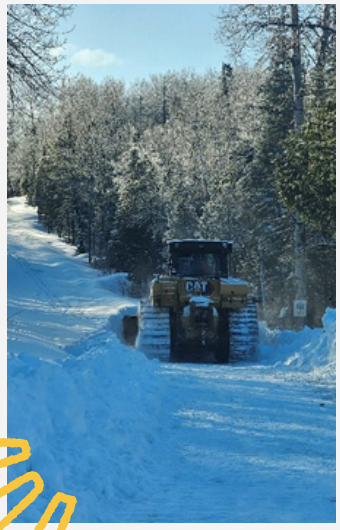
At this time, we are asking the public to please stay clear of all restrcited areas and do not access any trails near the site.







This quarter's snowfall was one for the books, with conditions being compared to a **100-year storm**. Despite the challenges, the Public Works team did an exceptional job keeping roads open and the community safe, prioritizing access for emergency services and Elders before clearing driveways throughout the community. **Chi Miigwetch** goes to the **dedicated crew, hired contractors, and community volunteers** who worked tirelessly around the clock, as well as **Gratton Construction** for generously donating equipment and time to assist with road clearing. This incredible team effort truly showed the strength of our community.







SOCIAL SERVICES

New Staff

Community Food Support Worker

In February, we welcomed Nadine Nootchtai as the Community Food Support Coordinator! Nadine can be reached at Community.foodsupport@wlfn.com.

Child and Youth Well-Being Worker

In March, we welcomed Jackson Gunner as the Child and Youth Well-Being Worker! Jackson can be reached at childyouth.wellbeing2@wlfn.com.

Child and Youth Worker

In March, we welcomed Cole Bailey as the Child and Youth Worker! Jackson can be reached at childyouth.worker3@wlfn.com.

The Family Support Workers provide voluntary, family-centered services, working collaboratively with the Family Advocacy Team and internal/external partners to address risks and strengthen family stability.

Programming Highlights:

- Regalia Making
- Mini Moccasins & Mitts Workshop
- Sewing Pouch Workshop
- Leather Rose Craft
- Apron Making Workshop
- Finish Your Project Night
- Dentalium Shell Earrings
- 6 Week Parenting Program



The Child & Youth Services Team collaborates with the Mino Bimaadiziwin Department to host the Bush Crafters Program. This land-based program focuses on:

- Traditional skills (ice fishing, outdoor safety, food systems)
- Teachings on bullying prevention, human trafficking, and self-awareness
- Youth engagement (ages 7–13) with structured, safe programming

On January 29 – 30, 2026, the Anti Guns & Gangs Prevention Worker, in collaboration with other departments, hosted the Roots & Rising (Oshki-zaagakiiwag Nitaawigi'angwaa) Youth Conference at the Holiday Inn on Regent Street in Sudbury.

The purpose of the conference was to engage youth and create meaningful connections with community partners and positive role models. Over the two days, participants took part in Youth Panel and Youth Council presentations, an Elder Panel and traditional teachings, interactive workshops and information sessions, and hands-on cultural activities such as medicine pouch making. The event also included other activities designed to encourage participation, learning, and relationship-building.

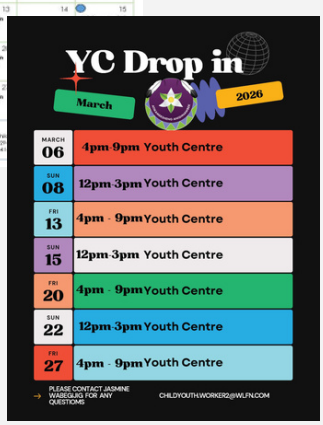
The Roots & Rising Youth Conference provided a supportive and empowering space where youth could build connections, strengthen cultural identity, and explore positive pathways alongside community leaders and mentors.













Join the Child & Youth Workers for weekly Gym Nights on Thursdays, and Youth Drop-Ins on Fridays and Sundays! Be sure to check the weekly flyer for monthly youth calendars and upcoming activities.

COMMUNITY & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Heavy Equipment Operator Training & Pathways to Employment Program

The Community Skills Development Program is pleased to partner with Slingchoker Academy to deliver the **Heavy Equipment Operator Training & Pathways to Employment Program** in Atikameksheng.



Eight members will participate in the first five-week training cohort beginning April 13, 2026. The first week will consist of in-class instruction, including an introduction to Common Core training. The remaining four weeks will focus on hands-on field training within the community. Participants will gain experience operating a bulldozer, excavator, grader, and backhoe.

A second cohort for an additional eight members is scheduled to begin on May 25, 2026. **Members interested in joining the May 25** cohort are encouraged to contact Tasheena Recollet, Community Skills Development Coordinator, at communityskills.coordinator@wlfn.com.



During this quarter, the Community Skills Development Program provided support to **25** Band Members through resume and cover letter assistance, employment and training guidance, Naadmaadwiiuk Employment & Training Program funding applications, and submission of resumes to Vale and other proponents.

A Band Member is set to graduate from the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario's Indigenous Heavy Equipment Operators Pre-Apprenticeship Program. This member attended the Community Skills Development Program's first OETIO Heavy Equipment Operators Pre-Apprenticeship Information Session in January 2025, registered immediately, and successfully completed the program in Morrisburg.

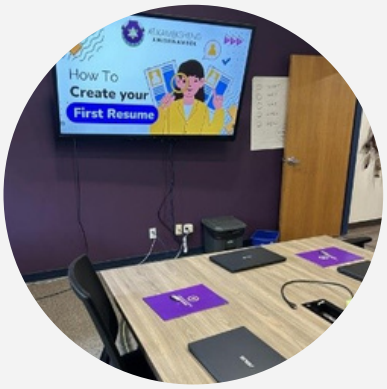
Community members interested in joining Local 793 and pursuing the pre-apprenticeship program are encouraged to contact the Community Skills Development Program.

Drop-In Support

The Community Skills Development Coordinator implemented monthly **drop-in** sessions at the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek **Community Hub** to better support members living off-reserve in Sudbury. These sessions provide accessible, in-person support, including resume and cover letter development, job search assistance, career guidance, and navigation of employment and training opportunities. The hub also serves as a point of access for members seeking information on available funding supports and programs. These drop-ins will continue monthly and are intended to strengthen engagement and ensure members have consistent access to employment and training resources.



Visit the Community Hub for the next Drop-In Support session on **Wednesday, April 29, 2026!** For more information, please contact communityskills.coordinator@wlfn.com.



The Community Skills Development Coordinator hosted a Youth Resume and Cover Letter Workshop. Three youth attended and created their first resumes!! Missed the workshop? Contact communityskills.coordinator@wlfn.com for support!

Energy

Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, and Wahnapitae First Nation have established a Coniston–Stinson working group that continues to meet weekly to share updates on the Coniston and Stinson Generating Station Life Extension Projects. These meetings include reviews of weekly inspections conducted by Atikameksheng and Wahnapitae staff. Discussions have also begun regarding fish habitat compensation, as required by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, related to fish mortality associated with hydroelectric operations.

WAASAKWA CHILDREN'S CENTRE GRAND OPENING



Monday, February 9, 2026, marked an incredible milestone for our community, families, and children as we celebrated the grand opening of the Waasakwa Children's Centre. We are so proud and excited to see this vision come to life!



Chi miigwetch to everyone whose dedication, hard work, and support helped bring us to this moment. We are also deeply grateful to Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige and Lake Huron Regional Chief Scott McLeod for joining us and sharing remarks on this special day.







WINTER CARINVAL



On Sunday, February 22, 2026, our Annual Winter Carnival brought a full day of winter fun to the community! A huge Miigwetch to everyone who came out and helped make it such a vibrant, fun-filled event. From the snowshoe race and hockey skills competition to the soapbox race, BINGO, and all the excitement surrounding the penny sale and LNHL bake sale, the day was packed with energy, laughter, and community spirit.

Your participation, support, and smiles are what make events like this so special. Miigwetch for showing up, cheering each other on, and celebrating winter together!



















