

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019 • 2020



Native Montréal  
Montréal Autochtone

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## Contributing to our diverse Indigenous community

Founded in 2014, by Indigenous leaders to provide services to Montreal's Indigenous community with a special focus on families, children and youth. Native Montreal aims to contribute to the holistic health, cultural strength and success of Indigenous families, individuals and the community in Montreal.

We believe that a continuum of services is essential to serve the multiple needs of our diverse community. We are a friendship center and a proud member of the friendship center movement.



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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear members and partners,

I am proud to present this overview of the results of the hard work of our employees, volunteers, Board of Directors and many partners and allies. As you know, this year was marked by the arrival of a global pandemic, the infamous COVID 19. However, our team and our members quickly adapted to this new reality and I am happy to note that despite the stress and the terrifying fear during the first months of this pandemic, we are resilient and we have continued our mission of serving our community.

Indeed, our team took a collective day off after the initial shock of the quarantine and we have collectively taken on the challenge of renewing ourselves towards a 100% online approach for all our activities and services that allow it.

This adaptation of services is marked by multiple successes such as: the continuity of psychosocial interventions, animation and coaching services for families, the online version of our craft workshops as well as the launch of the first summer session of digital language courses and the organisation of our first day camp 100% outside and in the context of a pandemic. Even our annual celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day was transformed into an online spectacle with over 6,000 spectators and numerous Indigenous performers and cooks from across the province. In addition, our team collaborated with the Network for the Indigenous Urban Strategy as well as other partners in the Indigenous community of Montreal to deploy a food aid program that has supported hundreds of individuals and families in the region.

These successes demonstrate that the members are there when our team maintains with determination the clearly essential services for the well-being of our community, and this is despite the temporary closure of our center, our collective weekly meeting point for so many of our members.

I believe our community can be proud of all the work our team is doing in this historic time and that the fruit of our efforts continues to contribute to a supportive and resilient Indigenous community.

**Philippe Tsaronsere Meilleur**

Executive Director



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Kwe,

While the purpose of an annual report is to take a look back on the past fiscal year, considering the current events I would be remiss not to speak about the present. The global pandemic has quickly thrown everyone into crisis management mode and put an incredible strain on all our community services and members. Native Montreal has worked hard to readjust to continue to deliver services all while ensuring the safety of our members and staff. As the current situation demands our attention and we look towards the future, Native Montreal will continue to find innovative ways to continue to support our community.

Throughout 2019-2020 the board has been laying the groundwork for our new strategic plan that is continuing to be developed this year. We are taking the time that we need to ensure that our planning reflects the actual needs of our members and prepares the path for our future growth. The successes and the achievements outlined in this year's annual report highlight the many ways Native Montreal contributes to strengthening our community. Our goal will be to continue to build and expand on these services.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support and commitment to our center. Without your confidence we could not have accomplished the important work we are doing. Throughout the next weeks and months Native Montreal will continue to support our members through this difficult time. I hope you are all safe and know that we are here for you and with you.

Meegwetch,  
**Jennifer Brazeau**  
President

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# Culture



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## Culture

### AIMUN

## LANGUAGES PROGRAM

The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Program, Aimun, was in its fifth year of programming and development, thanks to funding from Heritage Canada's Aboriginal Languages Initiative. Our summary of the year 2019-2020:

- **Two language course sessions** (autumn and winter)
- **16 classes taught in the fall:** Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin, Cree (for adults and children), Innu (3 adult levels, 1 child level), Inuktitut (1 adult level and 2 child levels), Kanien'keha (2 adult levels and 2 child classes) and Mi'kmaq
- **14 classes taught in the winter:** Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin, Cree (for adults and children), Innu (2 adult levels, 1 child level), Inuktitut (1 adult level and 2 child levels) and Kanien'keha (2 adult levels and 2 child classes)
- **397 people applied** for the 335 available spots
- **4 student workbooks developed with teachers:** Cree for children, Inuktitut for children and toddlers and Innu for children
- Language focus during our Iorahkote summer 2019 day camp –Cree, Inuktitut and Kanien'keha were taught to our **61 day camp children**
- A high rate of overall satisfaction of our members: **86% find the program excellent and 14% find it very good.** No one indicated that they were dissatisfied with the program.
- **100% of students want to continue** taking classes and 57% believe they are ready to upskill to a higher level.



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# Culture

## AIMUN

### LANGUAGES PROGRAM

The program continues to be a necessity for our members, both Indigenous members as well as those working with Indigenous clientele. Demand continues for greater levels and time slots.

Some of the comments were:

*«It would be great if the program did not merge all students from all levels and provided more classes for the different levels instead. I understand that there may not be enough funds or resources for this, however. I still think the program does a great job teaching students Indigenous languages.»*

*«I fall into the group of persons raised by elders who had been put into Residential school. So my heritage and lessons about Mohawk culture had been taken away. If it wasn't for this teacher who provided such insight to this culture and language. I am excited to learn more!»*

*«Wliwni for this much needed program which gives me access to my language and allows me to meet other members of my community»*



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# Culture

## CRAFT CIRCLE

Our 104 crafting events, ranging from regular bi-weekly craft circles, to workshops run by guest animators as well as our cooking series were attended by 808 people, a significant increase of 67% from last year. Attendees range from youth to elders. Our participants continue to report an improvement of skill levels, and our community is stronger for it.



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# Family wellness



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## Family wellness

2019 was the second and final year of our **NIB Trust Fund funded family programming**. Its goal was to support the development of parenting skills and the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge.

Through this program, we were able to offer a larger summer day camp as well as a March break day camp. We also inaugurated Saturday family activities known as '**Brunch with Karina**', with occasional guest speakers as well as On the land outings.

***Ensemble pour les Familles*** also joined us for several parenting workshops available during the week, weekend and some evenings.

We also were able to continue to facilitate parents' access, to cultural services that are already offered by reducing barriers by offering childcare and access to public transportation.



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## Family wellness

**122 visits**

to our family programs during our 28 activities

**152 of our members**

accessed our childcare service a total of 168 times

**18 children**

attended our spring break day camp the first week of March

**520 hours**

of quality child care was offered

**61 children**

attended our summer day camp during its 9-week session



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## Family wellness

# DRAMA THERAPY

Our fourth year hosting a drama therapy intern from Concordia University was another successful one. Drama Therapy is an active, experiential approach to facilitating change. Through storytelling, projective play, purposeful improvisation, and performance, participants are invited to rehearse desired behaviors, practice being in relationship, expand and find flexibility between life roles, and perform the change they wish to be and see in the world. -(North American Drama therapy association)

156 hours of drama therapy was provided to 16 members of our community from September 2019 to March 2020. The majority of participants were children and teenagers. These numbers are lower than last year's as we lost the private space at Billing's High School, where a bulk of our participants were from the prior year and shifted our focus to the primary school in that area. Most participants continue to express a positive experience and were recurrent participants.

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## **Family wellness**

# **ART THERAPY**

This school year, our families also had access to an art therapy intern on Saturdays, during our family brunches and language classes for children. This new service was held over the course of 19 weeks and was able to assist 7 members during 39 hours of direct art therapy for children and families.

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# Youth



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## Youth

Focused on creating new positive opportunities and breakthroughs for Indigenous youth in Montreal through group and cultural activities and personalized psychosocial support services, while fostering a sense of pride and security in being young Indigenous peoples in Montreal.

The Youth Wellness Strategy continues to focus on three focal points: **Engaging with the community, connecting with appropriate partners, and offering activities, programs and services that meet the needs and interests of its youth members.**

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## Youth

# EMPLOYABILITY

For a fourth year in a row, our *‘Mes Forces, Mes Compétences’* program supported youth in their year long pre-employability journey. This program was replaced, mid year, with *Service Québec’s Job Readiness Measures Program*. Participants attended weekly and individual interventions, group workshops, and school visits as well as regular cultural activities and workshops at the Centre.

Our employability worker has also assisted non-participants in the program with their résumés and maintained an updated job board at our location.

**Last year the program greeted 10 participants and was successful at getting up to 80% of its participants either to employment or back to school. Our intervention worker also assisted 9 participants with employment help.**

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## Youth

# YOUTH INTERVENTION WORKER

**39 youth were impacted positively** by our youth intervention worker, over the course of 514 interventions. The most discussed subjects were Mental Health, Community and Civil Citizenship, Income, Housing and Education.

49 internal referrals (to our other services) and 70 external referral were made.

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## Youth

# BILLINGS HIGH SCHOOL

**34 Visits from September to the beginning of March as our activities abruptly ended March 13 due to the pandemic.**

Supporting Indigenous students in partnership with NEST (Native Education Support Services). This included drama therapy (until end of May 2019 only), *Ensemble pour les Familles* emotions workshops, participating in Indigenous Culture Day and connecting students with Health Services.

**300 student visits occurred, most common recurring issues continue to be:  
Education, Interpersonal relationships, Mental health,  
Culture and Physical health**



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## Youth

# NATIVE MONTREAL YOUTH COUNCIL

Our **All My Relations: A Day of Indigenous Culture Sharing** event last June was a rousing success. The council was able to bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and elders from around the province to celebrate and share culture.

The second youth council was comprised of mostly returning members and counted a total of 9 members. Their Water project, due for July 2020 had to quickly be tabled due to the pandemic. The team continued to meet in order to offer different smaller projects which will be highlighted in our following annual report.



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## Youth

# YOUTH WELLNESS PROGRAMS

**54 youth centered activities,** attended by **284 participants; 46% women**

- Wellness on the Land
- Youth Drop-In

*“I was afraid to come to the center but am thrilled at the welcome. This is my first step of learning more about my Indigenous culture”*



Offering an opportunity for Indigenous youth to connect with the land, knowledge keepers, culture, and traditions while developing wilderness skills through on-the-land outings and activities.



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# Community Development





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# Community Development

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

This past year, Native Montreal hosted 4 major community events; Indigenous day in the park, Harvest Celebration, our first ever Volunteer Appreciation evening and of course, our annual winter holiday party.

These events included karaoke, reading tent, dodgebow, singing and dancing, etc... and of course GREAT FOOD.

**In total, 869 people, from newborn to elder, attended these activities.**



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# Community Development CIRCLES

**Native Montreal offered two circles; Women's and 2 Spirit.**

These circles are intended for our Indigenous members to gather, share and learn from each other, as well as attend varied workshops and activities.

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# Community Development

## WOMEN'S CIRCLE

Our Women's Circle met 21 times, with 100 visits from our women.

Some of the highlights continue to be:

- Women's day celebration
- Clothing swaps
- Ribbon skirt sewing



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## Community Development

# TWO SPIRIT CIRCLE

The self-led Two Spirit circle met less than 10 times, including preparing for Pride Week. Native Montreal assisted Indigenous artisans with tables during Pride Week and had a float with a drumming circle for the parade. The circle stopped meeting by summer 2019, of their own accord.





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# Education



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## Education

# IORAHKOTE DAY CAMP

With continued funding for educational initiatives from Quebec's ministry of education (MELS), we were pleased to offer the following activities and programs that support educational achievement and enrichment, including the following:

### Iorahkote Day Camp



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## Education

### IORAHKOTE DAY CAMP

Our summer day camp, attended by 61 children, included Indigenous language, arts and cooking activities as well as land-based learning and storytelling.



18 children attended our second annual Iorahkote March break day camp. We were excited to offer it as a first ever **100% OUTDOOR** experience and all of the children loved their experience and devoured the varied healthy lunches provided.

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## Education

### INDIGENOUS LIBRARY

Our library, featuring Indigenous authored literature for all ages, in multiple languages continues to be used by our members, volunteers and even staff during several activities and programs. Our titles are catalogued with *LibraryThing's* online cataloguing system.

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## Education

### CODE CLUB

In collaboration with Code Club Canada, Native Montreal offered two 10-week introductory computer coding course to members aged 8 to 12 as well as their adults.

These were attended on average, by 10 children and approximately 5 adults.

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## Education

# HOWARD S. BILLINGS HIGH SCHOOL

Indigenous students of Howard S. Billings High School in Châteauguay continued to have access to a bi-weekly after-school tutoring and mentoring program, established in partnership with McGill University's Social Equity and Diversity Education Office and the high school's Native Education Support Team (NEST).

- 16 individual students (grades 10-11) registered to receive tutoring
- 8-10 individual students accessed tutoring every week
- 10 McGill volunteers provided tutoring at H.S. Billings every week

A Kanieke:ha (Mohawk) knowledge keeper also provided weekly class visits and after school sessions geared towards Kanieke:ha language and culture teaching which were attended, on average by 8-10 Indigenous students.

**Weekly Kanieke:ha language classes** were also offered to, on average 5, primary school aged Indigenous children at the St-Willibrord school in Châteauguay.

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## Education

### KANEKOTA PROGRAM

Native Montreal continued its partnership with several local Indigenous organizations to establish Kanekota Program, a secondary-level adult education program in downtown Montreal for Indigenous adult learners.

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## Education

### READING CIRCLES

In partnership with Frontier College, Native Montreal offered weekly volunteer-led reading circles for young children accessing our childcare services as well as individual and group French language classes for adult members.

In total, the above programs created 127 separate activities, which were attended by 945 people, of which, most were children and young adults.

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# Support services





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## Support services

# PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION

The purpose of this service is to offer psychosocial support in order to improve access to services and support aboriginals in their personal, family and social issues.

### In one month of service:

- 21 client contacts; over 50% of these were women
- 21 active files
- Topics most discussed were Interpersonal Relations, Mental Health, Community and Housing

Native Montreal continues to work towards its Navigator model and added to its team, a Prevention and Intervention Services Manager in order to properly develop this service for the future.



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## Support services

# SMART RECOVERY

This year we attempted to run our program on Fridays in order to access more Indigenous participants living in the Metropolitan Urban Community who are experiencing a substance use problem or self-destructive behavior. It is a non-religious and abstinence-based program, but people who are still in consumption are also welcome. The program is in the form of a self-help group supported by a volunteer Aboriginal facilitator where group discussion and presentation of tools will take place.

**The facilitator, Joel Labillois, uses the four points of SMART Recovery:**

- 1) Build and maintain motivation
- 2) Coping with impulses
- 3) Manage thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- 4) Live a balanced life.

The program has been on hold since December 2019.

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## Support services

# VOLUNTEERING

Native Montreal offers varied opportunities for the community at large to give back.

**This year:**

「158 hours of volunteering was accomplished, by 18 people」

「32 activities required volunteers as well as other assorted tasks」

We thank all our volunteers for their dedication!

## PARTNERSHIPS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of contribution (Financial, Nature)</b>
Regroupement des centres d'amitiés du Québec	Financial, expertise, representation
Patrimoine Canada	Financial
Ministère de la sécurité publique	Financial
Ville de Montréal	Financial
Patrimoine Canada	Financial
Secrétariat de la Jeunesse	Financial
NIB Trust Fund	Financial
Service Québec	Financial
Etsy	Donation
Tasiutigiiit	Childhood and familys
CDRNPHQ	Employability and adult education
First Nations Adult Education	Adult education
Projet autochtone Québec	Adult education
Native Women's Shelter of Montreal - Foyer pour femmes	Adult education

## PARTNERSHIPS

Name	Type of contribution ( <i>Financial, Nature</i> )
Dawson college	Resource sharing
Billings High School	Youth and education
St-Willibrord Elementary	Childhood and education
Collège Frontières	Literacy and francization
McGill University Volunteering Initiatives	School perseverance
Department of Integrated Studie in Education   McGill University	Culture and arts
Entre deux âges	Housing Coalition
CACV	Housing Coalition
Centre jeunesse emploi du sud-ouest	Employability
Regroupement Économique et Sociale du Sud-Ouest de Montréal	Employability
Centre de justice des première nations	Youth intervention
Femme Autochtone du Québec	Youth engagement