



**2020 • 2021**

# Annual Report



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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.



# President's letter

Kwe Kakina,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are pleased to present this year's Annual Report summarizing the hard work over the past year of Native Montreal, with an emphasis on how we adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges that 2020-2021 brought, the staff of Native Montreal ensured the delivery of essential services while adjusting to guidance and advice from public health officials, ensuring that our staff and members remained safe.

Our team found new and innovative ways to deliver programs and services, including the use of technology and following social distancing guidelines. We not only increased but improved other services such as a new food security program and the organization of a COVID-19 vaccine clinic.



Our Board thanks the staff and leadership of Native Montreal for continually driving our organization forward, building new relationships with partners and community leaders from across sectors. Native Montreal has also worked to advance important conversations around Indigenous-led services, pursuing opportunities that help position our community towards a future where everyone belongs. The pandemic strained the social fabric of our community. COVID-19 did not create inequities, but it has exacerbated the chronic challenges people were already facing, like poverty, social isolation, and mental health that disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples. As an organization we worked proactively to respond and minimize these inequities through direct services and advocacy on behalf of our members.

In the year to come I personally look forward with optimism that we will once again be able to gather as a community and reconnect on a more personal level. Until then I would like to thank once again our staff, management, partners, and members for your continued support.

In friendship,

**Jennifer Brazeau**

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# Executive Director's letter

She: kon dear members and partners,

I am proud to present this overview of the results of the accomplished work of our employees, volunteers, board of directors and partner allies. As you know, 2020-2021 has been a year of optimism and disappointments about the return to normalcy. That said, our team ensured the continuity of most of our services offered before the pandemic and we continued to develop new programs and services.

Indeed, the majority of our services have been received and we have increased our team of navigators for both families and young people. We have learned that this intervention service focused on a holistic approach and support inspired by models based on the principle of self-determination is an intervention service that corresponds more to the needs of families and young people. We also ensured the continuity of our day camp, which was essential to us to allow many children to start playing again, to make new friendships and to allow a little respite for parents who had also become educators at home.

Our team has also provided essential leadership in the fight against covid 19, as we have developed services and initiatives that have served more than 1,000 members of our community. Among these new ad hoc services is the Food Aid Service which provided food assistance to over 100 families and individuals throughout the year. A first experience in the health field was our initiative to offer a culturally safe vaccination campaign. In collaboration with public health and the CIUSS centre sud as well as the Native Friendship Center of Montreal and the SQIA, we have created a registration portal specific to our community, offered telephone assistance to answer questions rented a site and ensured the presence of workers at the vaccination site. Together we ensured access to the first dose vaccination one month before the general population, in a cultural and safe environment. That's about 1,000 people who chose to be vaccinated against covid-19.

Our team has demonstrated its resilience and commitment to ensuring access to public services through a culturally safe approach. We have shown that we are able to provide the health system and that we are continuing this process to provide more health services to our members.

**Philippe Tsaronsere Meilleur**

General manager





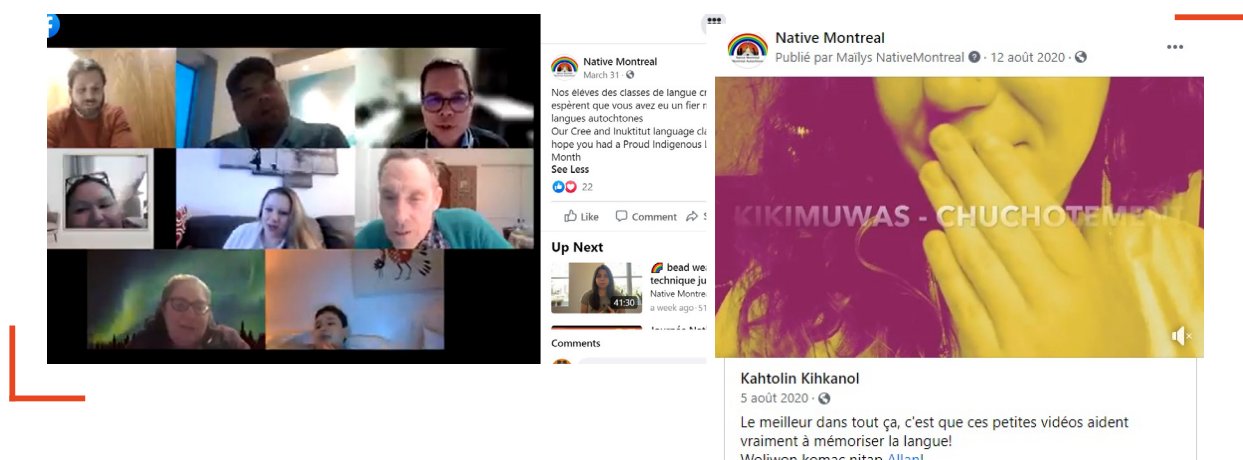
**Culture**

# Aimun Languages program

The Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Program, Aimun, was in its sixth year of programming and development, thanks to funding from Heritage Canada's Aboriginal Languages Initiative as well as some funding from the Provincial Ministry of Education. We successfully transitioned all of our programming to an online model, thanks to the willingness of teachers and students. Our summary of the year 2020-2021:

- **Three language course** sessions (summer, autumn and winter), all taught virtually
- **11 classes** were offered for the exceptional summer semester, due to requests as a result of Covid confinement. Of these, the children's classes did not have enough participants to run a class and we were unable to secure a Mi'kmaq teacher. The following 7 classes were taught: Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin (2 levels), Cree, Innu (2 levels), and Kanien'keha
- **18 classes** were offered for the fall/winter semester. Of these, the children's classes continued to not have enough participants to run a class and we were still unable to secure a Mi'kmaq teacher. The following 13 classes were taught: Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin (3 levels), Cree (3 classes), Inuktitut, Innu (3 classes), and Kanien'keha (2 classes)

- **15 classes** were offered and taught for the winter/spring semester: Abenaki, Anishinaabemowin (3 levels, 4 classes), Cree (2 levels), Inuktitut (2 levels, 3 classes), Innu (2 levels), and Kanien'keha (2 levels, 3 classes).
- **635 people** applied for the **464 available spots**.
- **1 student workbooks** developed with teacher: Abénaki, level 2.
- A continued high rate of overall satisfaction of our members: **85%** find the program excellent and **15%** find it very good. No one indicated that they were dissatisfied with the program and most were thankful we were able to offer the additional semester, levels and classes.
- **100%** of students want to continue taking classes and 45% believe they are ready to upskill to a higher level.
- 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.



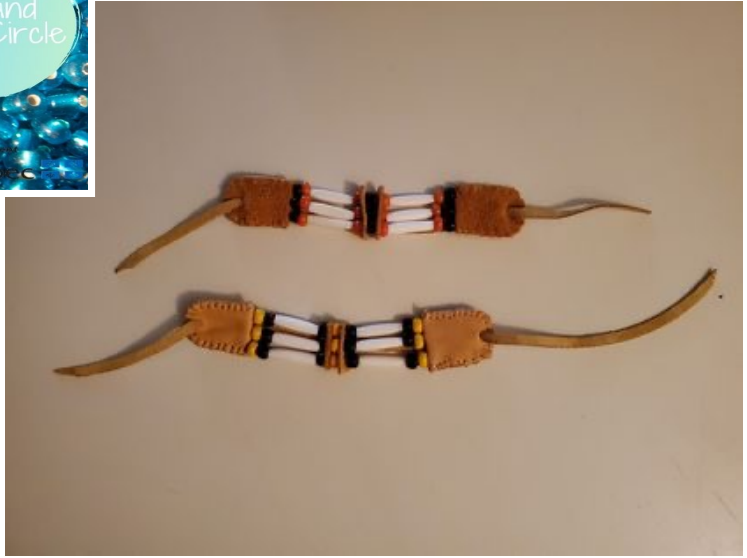


## Virtual arts and crafts circle

As we transitioned to online programming, we were able to offer our bi-weekly craft circles on Native Montreal's main Facebook page as well as offer weekly registered classes on our new Facebook group; *Cercle Art et Artisanat - Arts and Crafts Circle*. Members received the materials, free of charge, to their homes and were instructed on varied and new techniques by multiple knowledge keepers.

309 people participated in the registered online workshops and tens of thousands of viewers tuned in to the bi-weekly circles.







# **Family Programming**

# Native Montreal's family group

This group also saw its transition to an online format, on Facebook. Multiple activities were offered to families such as group chats, family coaching videos, yoga, gardening, crafts, story time, On the Land videos by knowledge keepers and Saturday online brunch. A dads' group was also launched but failed to get enough support in the online format. This group also delivered some educational supplies and toys both at the beginning of the school year and for the Christmas holidays. We were also able to do one On the Land activity before new public health measures were put into place.

Its goal was to support the development of parenting skills and the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge, in creative ways during the pandemic.

- 57 family Christmas toy deliveries
- 38 families received school supplies as well as educational toys at the beginning of the school year
- 5892 views of our 163 various online activities
- Average of 10 families participated in each weekly crafting workshop



## Drama Therapy

Our fifth 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 behaviours, 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)*

132 drama therapy contacts were provided to 12 members of our community from September 2020 to March 2021. The majority of participants were children and young adults. Most participants were very willing to transition to an online delivery of service. Participants continue to express *a positive experience* and were recurrent participants.

## Couples and Family Therapy & Coaching

We were pleased to offer this new service to our members. Sessions were entirely online and our therapy intern had 92 appointments with 116 participants. In total, 23 families and/or couples took part in this service, with some families accessing this service a dozen times.

Families looking to problem solve certain behaviours or family challenges were offered this ongoing service from Hand in Hand with Families. Approximately 2-4 families used this service per month.

# Iorahkote day camp

21 children attended first ever 100% outdoor summer day camp at both Angrignon and Arthur Therrien parks. Parents reported that children were thrilled to finally be able to socialize and play outside while still maintaining all of the public health requirements. The children also devoured the varied healthy lunches provided and our cook developed a recipe book based on these dishes which we distributed to all parents at Christmas time. Several of these recipes were also featured during the weekly virtual cooking workshops offered on our Family Facebook group.

Children got to play outside, take part in weekly cultural activities, go swimming at the pool and beach, essentially be kids again after a difficult few months. During the last week of camp, we distributed games and supplies to help keep children entertained during the upcoming colder months indoors.

Due to public health concerns, we were unable to offer a March break day camp due to concerns of children not being able to stay warm while maintaining social distance.



## Homework help

Indigenous students of Howard S. Billings High School in Châteauguay as well as St. Willibrord primary school continued to have access to a weekly after-school tutoring and mentoring program, established in partnership with McGill University's Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, the high school's Native Education Support Team (NEST) as well as Collège Frontières. As this service was offered online, children from other schools were able to access this homework help. In total, this service was accessed **27 times**.

## Family Navigators

The purpose of this service is to offer support in order to improve access to services and support Indigenous people in their personal, family and social aspirations.

### **This year we served:**

- **169 client** contacts; over **50% of these were women**.
- **63 active files**
- Topics most discussed were Mental Health, Physical Health, Education and Interpersonal relationships

*Native Montreal is successfully implementing its Navigator model, adding new navigators to the team.*

## Food security

Due to the pandemic, the federal government provided funds which were used in large part towards our food security program. This program provides grocery assistance to Indigenous members who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the means of grocery store gift cards or grocery store orders, we have supported families every month with access groceries for their families. During the 11 months this program ran, it was accessed 690 times.

In December 2020, the food security program partnered with the Montreal-based company Lufa Farms. **This partnership provides 25 Native Montreal families** with weekly baskets of fresh food, free of charge, on behalf of Lufa Farms. This project is hoping to expand to support more families throughout the upcoming year.







**Jeunesse**

# Employability

Our employability program, in partnership with Service Québec's Job Readiness Measures Program, supporting members in their six-month-long pre-employability journey, was put on hiatus at the beginning of 2020, to return in early 2021.

New participants attended weekly and individual interventions, group workshops, and school visits as well as regular virtual trainings, cultural activities and workshops through the Centre.

Our employability worker has also assisted **9 non-participants** in the program with their résumés and maintains an updated job board at our location.

Last year the program greeted **3 participants** and was successful at getting up to **66% of its participants either to employment or back to school.**



## Youth Intervention Worker

31 youths were impacted positively by our youth intervention worker, over the course of 1010 interventions, mostly online. The most discussed subjects were mental health, physical health and interpersonal relationships. Ninety-nine internal referrals (to our other services) and 104 external referrals were made.

## Billings High school

In collaboration with the *Canadian Roots Exchange*, Native Montreal began an afternoon online program to support youth from this high school, during the tumultuous times of the pandemic. This collaboration was in its planning stage at the end of this reporting year.

## Native Montreal Youth Council

The third youth council was comprised of mostly returning members and counted a total of 10 members. Their Water project, due for July 2020 quickly having to be tabled due to the pandemic, the council shifted its focus to an online Indigenous Whispers ASMR project. *#Indigenouswhispers* or *#Chuchoteursautochtones* received press attention and the subject of thousands of views as well as content provided across the country.



# **Community Development**

## Community event

This past year, Native Montreal hosted 1 major online community event; National Indigenous day on Facebook. This 4-hour event included family programming, cooking demonstrations and a concert by several artists such as:

**CÉLÉBRONS | LET'S CELEBRATE**  
LA JOURNÉE NATIONALE DES AUTOCHTONES  
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DAY

**FABEBOOK LIVE**  
.....  
**21** JUIN  
JUNE  
16 H À 20 H  
4 to 8 PM  
.....  
ATELIERS DE CUISINE  
ET JEUX POUR ENFANTS !

Claude McKenzie  
Soleil Launière  
Nina Segalowitz  
et Sierra Thrasher  
Matiu  
iskwē  
Shauit feat. Socalled  
Willows  
Moe Clark

PRÉSENTÉ PAR  
Native Montreal  
Montreal Autochtone

**MUSIQUE NOMADE**

The poster features three photographs: a woman in traditional Indigenous attire, a close-up of a smiling man, and two women singing into microphones. The background is a gradient of red and teal with white line art.

This event was viewed by  
**6100 people.**



# Partnerships

Partner name	Type of contribution
Regroupement des centres d'amitiés du Québec	Financial, expertise, representation
Collège Frontières	Literacy and french language teaching
McGill University Volunteering Initiatives	School perseverance
Billings High School	Youth and education
First Nations Adult Education	Adult education
CDRNPHQ	Employability and adult education
Projet autochtone Québec	Intervention and housing
Espace pour la vie (Jardin des première nations)	Free admission for members
Ferme Lufa	Food Safety
Tasiutigiiit	Childhood and family
Centre jeunesse emplois du Sud-Ouest	Employability
Centre de justice des première nations	Justice and Youth Intervention
Department of Integrated Studies in Education   McGill University	Culture and arts
Pathy family foundation	Financial
Ville de Montréal	Financier
Patrimoine Canada	Financial
Ministère de la sécurité publique	Financial
Services aux autochtones Canada	Financial
Service Québec	Financial
Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones	Financial
ESDC	Financial
Head and Hands	Financial
McGill university	Financial



Native Montréal  
Montréal Autochtone