

Annual Report 2022

# **Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

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# Letter from the Director of Community Learning & Engagement



**Angeline Nelson**  
*Director of Community  
Learning & Engagement*

Aniin,

As the winter solstice approaches, the year end is a great time for reflection. The 2022 year has been quite the year, filled with many positives and we are grateful for the opportunity to connect with the community through the computer lab, our many community programs, and campus events. This past year most of our programs were offered in person with only the Anishinaabe language classes remaining online. It has been great to see many people in person and to return to hosting our annual holiday dinner in person.

Since June, with the added responsibilities of being Acting Lead for Indigenous Engagement, I have to acknowledge the tremendous job of the WiiChii team, our volunteers, and partners for all of the ways they contributed to ensuring our programs continued to grow and flourish.

As always, our team is thankful for the organizations, partners, generous supporters and funders who share the vision of the Centre to light pathways to education for underrepresented youth. Supporting that vision this year, we acknowledge that CanCode became our largest funder of our STEAM outreach programs. We also received increased support from the amazing folks at the Winnipeg Foundation, Kingfisher Foundation, and our wonderful friend Jennifer Roblin and her network who partake in the Tea for WiiChii.

On behalf of the team, I hope you enjoy this look back at the work we are privileged to do.

– Angeline Nelson

# Letter from the Program Coordinator



**Julie Hiebert**  
*Program Coordinator*

Boozhoo,

This past year was full of awesome memories. We hosted our first ever STEM Day with Niji Mahkwa School. Collaborations with Indigenous artists such as Taylor McArthur, Kaelan Linklater-Anderson, and Melissa Johns who led digital art sessions for Indigenous STEAM Camp. Seeing all of the content created from, So, you want to be a YouTuber? and Intro to Photography. Helping to organize the Treaty 1 and Metis flag raising at UWinnipeg and engaging with over 500 folks for the week of activities for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.

As the program coordinator at the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, I am genuinely proud of those memories and so many more of the activities and programs that we provided in 2022. I am so grateful for the opportunity to connect and work with both the UWinnipeg Campus community as well as the children, families and other members in the larger community.

I would like to acknowledge all of the program and workshop facilitators, summer leaders, volunteers, online instructors and other partners for coming together to ensure all of our programs ran properly throughout the year.

The programs and events that we host provide a unique opportunity to many of our participants. I love being given the chance to plan, adapt and develop the programs we host. It provides me with a chance to provide culturally relevant and important programming to the community. On top of that, I enjoy the reaction from the participants when they get to try something they have never tried or really excel at something they are passionate about.

As we think about and reflect upon 2022, the team here at WiiChii is so excited for what we are planning for the 2023 year. If you are interested in what Wii have to offer please follow us on Facebook and continue to check [uwinnipeg.ca/wiichii](https://uwinnipeg.ca/wiichii).

– Julie Hiebert



# Year In Review

For the first two months, our centre remained physically closed with most programs and workshops being delivered online. As of March, all but one of our programs moved back to being hosted in person, then in May, our computer lab finally reopened to the public.

## Youth Supports:

### STEAM Activities and Workshops

- › STEM Explorers was our first program to move back to in-person and ran from February 17 to May 26, and again from September 22 to December 1. This program hosts up to 20 youth weekly at the centre in a variety of STEM-related workshops.
- › So, you want to be a Youtuber? ran two beginner-level 6 week programs - one in the Spring and one in the Fall. All participants learned to design, shoot and edit their own short videos. At the end of the program they hosted a movie screening and celebration.
- › Our first ever STEM Day with WiiChii hosted 150+ students all of whom were from the grades 1-8 classes from Niji Mahkwa School which had 11 different kinds of STEM-sessions running concurrently.
- › Indigenous STEAM Camp hosted the largest number of kids to date at 199 youth. It was a busy, and fun 4 weeks, full of lots of exploring, for all of the kids, summer students and teachers involved.
- › Continuing a years-long partnership, our team delivered coding lessons to 1213 youth as part of WASAC's Adventure Kids Camp. Using our 45+ programming laptops teams of 2 delivered over 35 sessions.
- › Intro to Photography was a new 4-week program that we piloted in the fall and was so well received that it filled in less than a day.
- › STEM kids on campus continued running its weekly 6-week program with grades 5 & 6 classrooms from Niji Mahkwa and youth from CEDA Pathways.

## Language and Cultural Programs and Initiatives:

- › Regalia workshops were hosted online in January and February in place of our regular Powwow Club. Each workshop spanned three evenings on zoom and included instruction in applique moccasin and belt making. Supplies were provided and equipment/tools were loaned.
- › Powwow Club moved back in person from March 3 to May 31 with the registrants being split into 2 groups to accommodate capacity restrictions. Then from September 20th to December 6th with capacity back to normal attendance increased weekly to an average of 98 people.
- › Sacred Seven - our girls and LGBTQ2S+ group - ran in person from March 3 to May 31 and September 20th to December 6th hosting about 15-18 youth each week in a variety of life skill building activities.
- › Beginner Learning Anishinaabemowin ran from September 21 to December 7 with over 63 families registering and learning the basics of conversation in Ojibwe.
- › Women's self-defence program ran in the winter for 10 weeks and in the fall for 8 weeks with each hosting 35-45 individuals weekly.
- › Our series of Learning Anishinaabemowin videos are still being actively used through our Youtube channel [@wiichiwaakanak](#). The first series focuses on introductory conversation while the second series focuses on crafting in Anishinaabemowin.





a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)

- a) School Supply Donations
- c) Woodland Art
- e) Stop-Go Animation Workshop

- b) STEAM Camp - Greenhouse Committee
- d) STEM Day - Chem Room
- f) Winter Gear Donation

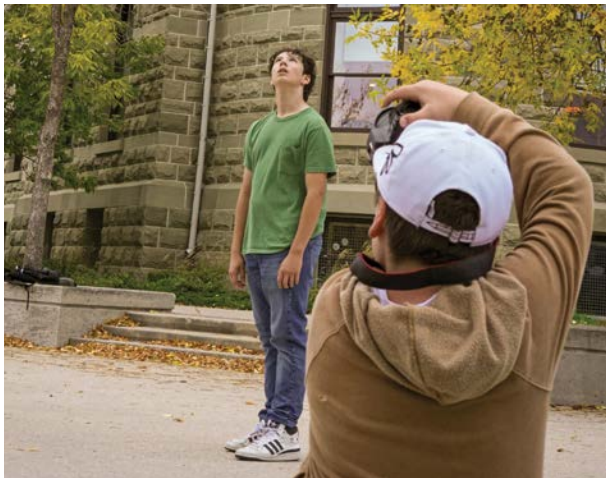




a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)

a) Rocket Launch

c) Intro to Photography

e) Science Kids on Campus - VR

b) STEM Day - Dry Ice Session

d) Science Kids on Campus Spring

f) STEAM Camp - Woodland Art



## Community Supports:

- › The public computer lab at Wii Chiiwaakanak which re-opened May 24, hosts 16 computers, a printing station, and is staffed to provide 1-1 support for resumes, cover letters, and share community resources.
- › The Spring Feast hosted annually at UWinnipeg is to celebrate and honour Indigenous achievement in community, student success, and scholarly work.
- › The Treaty 1 and Métis flag raising event hosted over 200 people to witness the permanent installation of both flags on the UWinnipeg campus.
- › For Orange Shirt Day the WiiChii team hosted an info and giveaway table providing booklets on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Every Child Matters stickers, and orange cupcakes.
- › School supply donation of over \$1000 was provided to Spence Neighbourhood Association in late August to support local families.

- › Over \$2500 in winter gear was split and donated to West End 24 Hour Safe Space, Main Street Project and Niji Mahkwa School.
- › The 3rd annual Indigenous staff and faculty event was hosted on June 17th to build a sense of community and support amongst Indigenous people on campus.

## Community Holiday Dinner

- › For the first time since 2019, Wii Chiiwaakanak celebrated the holidays with the community by hosting an in-person annual holiday dinner on campus. Our partners, Les Marmiton, Diversity Food Services, and Urban Systems as well as donations and volunteers from the University staff and faculty help to make this event larger each year. The in-person event hosted 224 people - 137 of which were youth 17 & under - to a full holiday meal, 5-8 activity stations, a photo booth, entertainment and gifts for every child 17 & under.



# Program Overview

In addition to our core programs listed below, we also offer a variety of programs in partnership with other community organizations and workshops throughout the year. All of our programs are meant to be as low-barrier as possible; thus, they are completely free, food or snacks are provided, and transportation needs are met with bus tickets for families or bussing from schools and/or safe rides being provided for our Sacred Seven program.

## Sacred Seven

A strength building project that focuses on empowering young women, girls, and two-spirit youth, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally through cultural knowledge, practices, and mentorship. The goal is to provide meaningful athletic, cultural and recreational experiences for youth that will build on their capacity to become role models, leaders and valuable contributors in their communities.

Throughout the program, participants have an opportunity to engage with mentors while also developing new skills such as regalia making, self-defence, beading, Indigenous wellness, and much more.

## Learning Anishinaabemowin

This weekly cultural program provides parents, children, and individuals of all ages with a chance to learn the Ojibwe language. Language resources are provided to participants. This program can typically accommodate 40 people, both in-person and online, to allow the participants more interaction with the instructor.

## Women's Self-Defence

A self-defence class for female identifying participants aged 12+ and led by Professor Jason Parenteau, Behring Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Blackbelt. This class uses Jiu-Jitsu techniques to teach participants valuable self-defence skills, covering common escapes and movements effectively to help individuals have a stronger sense of personal safety. A guest instructor also assists in helping participants to understand the current laws in Manitoba. This program is offered twice a year - once in the fall and winter.

## Pow Wow Club

Pow Wow Club is an intergenerational program to learn about pow wow dancing, songs, and the history and teachings behind them. Families participate in this program together with the youth often leading the way in dance. Regalia nights and celebration feasts are hosted at the end of each year.

## Digital Literacy Programs

(including YouTuber and Intro to Photography)

Geared towards kids ages 9-12, these programs equip youth with basic digital media skills including: the basics of storyboarding; DSLR camera usage and techniques; video production; and editing. Each participant develops and creates their digital media from their own initial idea to the final product with help every step of the way. These in person programs provide all equipment needed at the centre.

## STEM Explorers

This afterschool program runs weekly on Thursdays from late September to May of each year. This program hosts the youth from the Building Belonging program at Spence Neighbourhood Association in an effort to ensure youth from the inner city have specific STEM opportunities. Program facilitators include Indigenous science students at UWinnipeg and a first year Indigenous medical student from UManitoba's community service learning program.

## Indigenous STEAM Camp

(Science Technology Engineering Art Math)

This summer day camp hosted nearly 200 children and youth going into grades 1-6 on campus over four week-long camps. Activities include hands-on experiments in labs on campus, math lessons, 3D design, multiple levels of coding, dissections, animation workshops, engineering activities and more. In addition to STEAM learning, youth participate in activities that combine Indigenous knowledge with other departments at the University of Winnipeg such as Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science and Biology. Indigenous knowledge keepers share traditional knowledge about many topics such as traditional medicines, star teachings, creation stories, traditional games, feasting ceremonies, water storage and more.

## STEM on Campus

In partnership with inner city and north end schools this program hosts grade 5 and 6 classrooms over 6-8 weekly STEAM sessions. Youth participate in activities such as building and programming lego robotics, aerospace workshops, engineering activities, and 3D computer graphics to name a few.

## STEM Day with Wii Chii

This 1-day event is filled with a variety of incredible STEM opportunities and is inspired by Science Rendezvous, but with Wii Chii's community engagement approach. The focus is on inner city and north end schools and lunch is provided. All classrooms are scheduled into 3 to 4 of the 14 different workshops throughout the day, such as coding, stethoscope and heart health, biology cell, squid dissection, stop-go animation, ProCreate workshops, and dry ice physics.

## Adventure Kids Summer Camp

In partnership with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre (WASAC) the team from Wii Chiiwaakanak designs and delivers new coding activities to all of the camp attendees. Our team brings our programming laptops to up to 6 different program sites across the city to deliver the sessions to over 1200 youth.











# Community Partnerships

Wii Chiiwaakanak partners with multiple community partners each year to build leadership opportunities and to better serve under-resourced communities. Here is one we would like to highlight.

## SNA's Building Belonging Program

The Spence Neighbourhood Association's (SNA) Building Belonging program has been a long-time community partner of the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre that ensures we are reaching the kids from the neighbourhood we are located within. They do an excellent job serving the folks within the Spence neighborhood and work hard to revitalize and renew their community in the areas of holistic housing, community connecting, community economic development, environment and open spaces, and youth and families.

SNA's Building Belonging program is their after school and summer program that hosts up to 46 children ages 6-12, most of whom are Indigenous or newcomer. It is led by Allison Besel and several youth mentors that support the youth each day. Every Thursday about 20 of the children walk over with 2-3 of their youth mentors to participate in the STEM explorers program. Allison shares that, "STEM Explorers gets the kids into learning every week and provides them valuable access to technology and quality instruction.

We love how welcoming and supportive the centre and instructors are, they help make the kids feel at home in the University." Through this program youth are able to see themselves represented in the facilitators who lead activities which allows them to envision themselves one day as future scientists, programmers, and researchers; and most importantly, to have fun in the program.

Reflecting on the impact of the programming for the kids, Allison shares a story about one of the 7 year old participants, who she says, "often has a hard time focusing, [but] has become an expert on coding in Minecraft. He always makes sure he is first in line to sign up and we can call on him to help any other kids who are struggling. It's incredible to see how proud and patient he has become when he helps guide others through a quest." Allison sees how the vision between SNA and Wii Chiiwaakanak align together to provide youth in the inner city of Winnipeg with equitable opportunities to grow while building confidence and developing skills for the future.



# Program Volunteer Voices

Wii Chiiwaakanak partners with multiple programs to host volunteers for work experience or service learning hours. Here is a bit about one of our volunteers and their invaluable contributions to the work of the centre.



## Dylan Robinson

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Dylan is a member of Oxford House First Nation, on his paternal side, with his maternal lineage coming from St. Laurent. Dylan is a former member of (.calSES) the Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society UWinnipeg chapter and an alumnus of UWinnipeg having completed his Bachelor of Science in the spring of 2021.

Dylan's first volunteer experience with Wii Chiiwaakanak was as an Indigenous summer scholar and NSERC USRA with Dr. Tabitha Wood in 2019, leading a pH and water experiment. He continued with our STEAM outreach as a UW science student, then in September 2021 Dylan started in the Rady Faculty of Medicine where he chose Wii Chiiwaakanak as his service learning placement for the next two years.

Dylan enjoys seeing the kids engaged in technical experiments and their reactions if and when the experiments come to fruition. The youth in STEM explorers have science concepts clearly demonstrated, are exposed to the theory behind each activity and get to understand any chemical reactions that might occur.

His goal in volunteering is to show youth they can study science, medicine, engineering, or any post-secondary program for that matter and to show youth that there is room for diversity and Indigenous representation in these fields. Dylan is, without a doubt, a strong Indigenous role model for youth and an exemplary representative of his community, his university, and his profession.

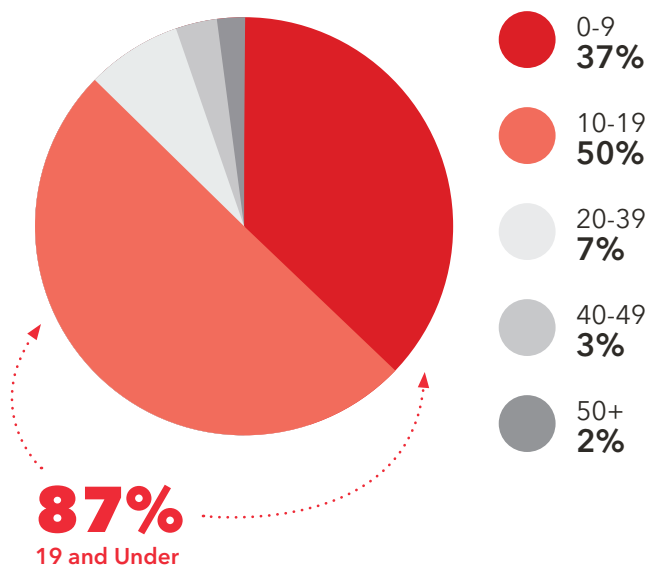
For the past year and a half Dylan has been an incredible addition to the STEM explorers program. This afterschool program serves Indigenous youth and newcomers from the area through Spence Neighbourhood Association's Building Belonging program. Running from September to May each year, participants are led through a variety of STEM-related activities on a weekly basis. They participate in activities like building and launching rockets, making catapults, stethoscopes, dissecting squids, coding, and more. Most importantly, these activities are developed in-house and led by as many amazing Indigenous volunteers, like Dylan, as possible.

# Our Year In Review

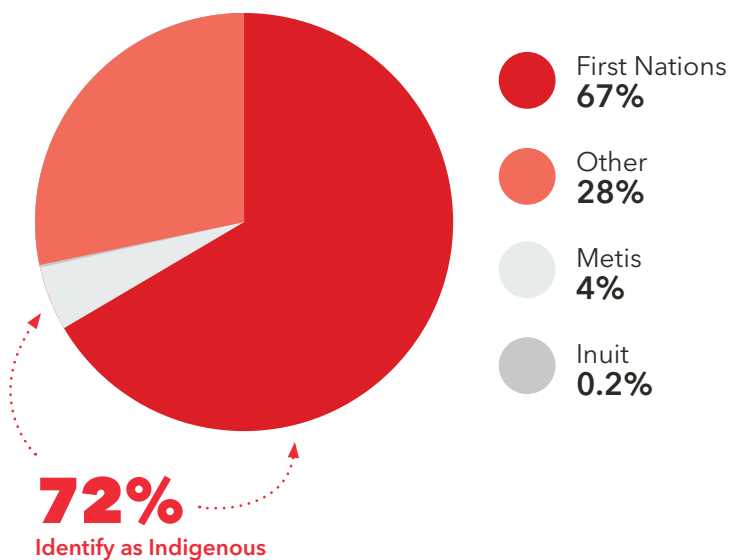
## Who uses Wii Chii?

(Total Users: 2564)

### Age Range



### Ethnicity



**24**

Indigenous Program  
Facilitators

**15**

Different Programs

**3,369**

Visits to our  
STEAM Programs

**3,236**

Visits to Language and  
Cultural Programming

**1,106**

Visits to our Community  
Events and Initiatives

**53%**

of Visitors Identify  
as Female



## Our Funders

Kingfisher Foundation	Jennifer Roblin and Friends	
	Canada 	Indigenous Engagement
		
Urban Systems, Diversity and Les Marmiton	The University of Winnipeg Faculty, Staff, Students, Retirees and Alumni	Dr. Jaime Cidro

## Our Partners

- › The University of Winnipeg Foundation
- › Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre
- › SNA's Building Belonging Program
- › Aabijjiwaan New Media Lab
- › Community Education Development Association
- › Sunshine House
- › Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society (.caISES) UWinnipeg chapter
- › The University of Winnipeg Greenhouse Committee
- › UM Max Rady College of Medicine Service Learning
- › Niji Mahkwa School
- › Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre
- › Kani Kanichihk Heart Medicine Lodge program
- › University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture & IDIPSA
- › Urban Systems
- › Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba
- › Science Rendezvous



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