

Annual Report 2024

Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

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Letter from the Wii Chiiwaakanak Team



Angeline Nelson
*Director of Community
Learning & Engagement*

Julie Hiebert
Program Coordinator

Aniin,

Welcome to another look back on updates and proud moments for our Centre from 2024. Through our programs and events, we bring community to campus, help families and young people connect to Indigenous languages and culture, and light pathways to post-secondary for first generation students.

Thousands of youth and families come to the UWinnipeg campus through our programs each year. Our drop-in powwow club – the largest in all of Winnipeg – has over 1,000 people registered and anywhere from 80-220 people attending each week. This year, our third annual STEM Days with Wii Chii was the biggest to date, hosting almost 1,000 Grades 3-8 youth on campus. Our learning Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) I & II classes have over 100 people applying for each class. In the summer, our team bears witness to summer students who grow in their leadership ability, self-confidence, and help others to bring that out in themselves. They are supported through several layers of mentorship all while supporting our young campers in Indigenous STEAM camp.

All of this work is only possible through the support of external funders, donors, and the generosity of our community. Our largest donor has been a supporter for many years; the Kingfisher Foundation, whose generosity supports our powwow club and self-defense classes and has committed for two more years. Jen Roblin and Friends through the Tea for Wii Chii, in its tenth year, continue to be champions and help in supporting the costs of transportation and the nourishment we are able to provide to all youth in our programs. Solid support from the University of Winnipeg Foundation through the Duff Roblin dinner continues as well as connecting us with new donors like Mr. Gracie and Ms. Loxley.

– Angeline & Julie



Year In Review

Our language and cultural programs remain consistent all while continuing to engage more families each year! With our STEM programs being newer, we have focused on expanding to meet the increased requests for free STEM programming from our community.

STEAM Outreach

STEM Explorers and Code Club

- › A weekly after-school program in partnership with SNA's building belonging program that runs from January to May and September to December of each year. Indigenous medical and undergrad science students to help with leading experiments and coding activities to all 70+ students in their program who alternate attending each week.
- › Snacks, meals, supplies, and student honorariums are provided.

STEM Days with Wii Chii

- › Our third annual event, in partnership with Dr. Tabitha Wood and the Faculty of Science hosted almost 1,000 students. Grades 3-8 classes attended from Sagkeeng Anicinabe, David Livingstone, John M. King, Glen Elm, Sister MacNamara, William Whyte, Niji Mahkwa, Strathcona, and Wellington Schools.
- › There were over 31 different sessions such as drones, dry ice, engineering, robotics with Red River Polytechnic, bone science, 3D scanning and topography, rock identification, dendrochronology, and everyone's favourite: the chemistry magic show!
- › This event focuses on inner city, north end, and First Nation schools in an effort to increase diversity in STEM fields. Buses within the city are provided to schools and lunch is provided to every youth, volunteer, and teacher in attendance.
- › Thanks to over 90+ UWinnipeg staff, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students we can host this magical event.

Indigenous STEAM Camp

- › Hosting 258 kids, this was once again, our largest camp to date!
- › All four one-week camps were full of fun and learning for all the kids. Some notable sessions were Lego Robotics with Inti, chemistry with Dr. Wood and graduate students, and a new art workshop with Peatr Thomas along with a new field trip each week.
- › Twelve summer students, three teachers, 18+ STEAM facilitators, and staff from Wii Chiiwaakanak and our community partner CEDA were involved.
- › Summer students participate in a week of training and prep before camp as well as week after camp to unwind with campus tours, Indigenous cultural activities like medicine picking, ribbon skirt/shirt making, and resume building.

Coding with Adventure Kids Camp

- › In partnership with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre's camp, two coding leads facilitated 35+ Minecraft coding sessions and other block coding activities, over 5 weeks of summer programming to over 1,000 youth.



Language and Cultural Programs

Powwow Club

- › Since 2013, our drop-in powwow club has grown to be the largest club in Winnipeg with over 1,000 registered. Anywhere from 80-220 people attend each week and have an opportunity to learn and practice drumming as well as each category of dance.
- › This after-school program runs Tuesdays from September to May of each year and provides juice boxes and a small meal each week.
- › Ray Coco Stevenson and Rhonda James have led this program alongside many volunteer drummers since its inception.

Indigenous Craft Group

- › From January to April, a new project was hosted each week for Indigenous girls, women, and 2-Spirit individuals. They worked on items like dentillium necklaces, applique items, ribbon skirts, and beaded lanyards.
- › Various regalia workshops were hosted for one weekend each month in January to April. Each workshop hosted 10-18 people with most being Indigenous female, 2S or youth.
- › Applique moccasins, leather belts, jingle dresses, fancy shawls, and grass dance outfits were created. Supplies, sewing equipment and tools were provided for each participant. Lunch, snacks, and bus tickets were also provided.

BYOBeads with Dawnis & Sharissa

- › Hosted on Saturdays from February to April, this program complemented our regalia sessions and Indigenous craft group, giving community members an opportunity to work on their crafts.
- › Supported by two amazing artisans, everyone had the opportunity to learn about beading in a fun environment, eat good food, and share unapologetic aunty laughs.

Learning Anishinaabemowin I & II

- › In line with the academic term, Learning Anishinaabemowin I is hosted from September to December with a class and language lab. It is run by a fluent second language speaker and an apprentice with the goal of identifying more apprentice learners. The first program had over 150 people apply with about 85 being admitted.
- › Learning Anishinaabemowin II runs January to March with over 100 applicants and about 60 admitted to the program. Fluency levels of participants are at about the same level to build confidence and speaking ability of learners.

Women's Self-Defense

- › This program runs twice, once in the fall and once in the winter, with each program having approx 45 individuals registered.
- › It is open to girls, women, and 2S individuals and is hosted by a Jiu Jitsu black belt teacher and a helper.
- › Each person joins this program for their own reasons. With care and kindness, every participant learns invaluable skills that help to build confidence during the 9-week program.



Community Supports

Computer Lab

- › The public computer lab at Wii Chiiwaakanak is open 3 days a week, hosts 16 computers, a printing station, is staffed to provide 1-1 support for resumes, cover letters, and share community resources.

Community Classroom Use

- › Our Centre hosted the Indigenous Summer Scholars Program, Pathways to Graduate Studies, Indigenous Student Association, and community-led workshops to host various regalia craft workshops. As our space has been renovated over the years it is well set up to host many craft activities.
- › A week-long train-the-trainer for regalia instructors was hosted by Deanne Hupfield that taught 12 community instructors to pass down the skills and knowledge of regalia making in their respective communities.
- › Kani Kanichik's Heart Medicine Lodge, also utilized our space for their Heart Medicine Lodge program throughout the year.
- › Indigenous faculty, like Dr. Mattes, also utilize our space during the academic year as it has kitchen access and is a beautiful culturally safe space for students.

Indigenous Events at UWinnipeg

- › In being a part of Honouring Indigenous Achievement, that celebrates and honours student success from the Collegiate, undergrads, graduate students, and faculty scholarly work, our team acknowledges an invaluable community partner. This year, we honoured Rockford McKay, a longtime Indigenous science facilitator who has helped us with much our STEM outreach. A beloved teacher and mentor, he has inspired many Indigenous youth along his journey.
- › For Orange Shirt Day, the Wii Chiiwaakanak team hosted an info and giveaway table providing booklets on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Every Child Matters stickers, and orange cupcakes.
- › As part of the UW pow wow committee, Wii Chiiwaakanak supports the annual UWinnipeg Graduation Pow Wow with securing head staff and supporting various tasks as needed.

Community Holiday Dinner

- › Wii Chiiwaakanak celebrated the holidays with the community by hosting our annual holiday dinner on campus. Our partners Les Marmiton and Diversity Food Services each sponsored 1/3 of the traditional holiday meal for the 221 individuals who attended our annual event.
- › Donations and volunteers from the University staff, faculty, and the Retirees Association help make this event happen each year. 113 were youth 17 & under who enjoyed the 4 activity stations, a photo booth, face painters, entertainment and gifts for every child 17 & under.

Community Facilitators

Wii Chiiwaakanak works with over 30 external facilitators and program staff to bring our programming to life. Here is a feature of our two new student teachers for Indigenous STEAM Camp – one of whom is a former summer student.

Ashley Whitebird-Sinclair and Ambrose Bushie

Ashley and Ambrose are both in the Build From Within Program, a Teacher Education program with UW and the Winnipeg School Division, who completed their first year of university in May 2024. Ambrose, returning for this third summer with Indigenous STEAM camp recruited his fellow student to co-teach one of our cohorts for their first year.

Ambrose is from Hollow Water First Nation and first started working with Wii Chii in 2022, as a high school student with CEDA. In 2023, he returned as a summer student just after graduating with his Grade 12 diploma. In these roles he supported the camp teachers as well as the program participants in each of their activities.

In 2024, Ambrose and Ashley joined us as student teachers leading a classroom of Grades 1-3 students for two whole weeks, as well as providing guidance and mentorship to our incoming group of summer students.

Ashley, from Rolling River First Nation, is a mom to two kids and is a natural in the classroom. This was her first year with the program but fit in easily with our team and the youth involved. Kids are drawn to her caring and kind nature. Ashley shared, “I enjoyed having the opportunity to see how a classroom functions, to work with different age ranges, such as early years and middle years, and I felt stronger after working with the early years children.” Ashley also appreciated being able to bring her cultural perspectives, language and teachings to the STEAM camp, which aligned with her goal of eventually becoming a Anishinaabe language teacher.



The Centre's camps have always had the privilege of being teacher-led, often by highly experienced teachers. This new level of mentorship where education students had the opportunity to lead their own camp and to support summer students was a great experience. After their two weeks of leading camps, they graciously went back to support the teachers for the last two weeks feeling stronger in their own leadership skills and being able to lean on the teachers for guidance and support.

Over the years the team at Wii Chii gets to play a small role in supporting incredible students like these two, some longer than others, bearing witness to their beautiful journeys, gaining independence, overcoming barriers and seeing what's possible when you start seeing the potential others see. As Ashley reflected, "this showed me how a community brings everyone together, I built strong relationships and met new peoples within the Wii Chiwaakanak community."

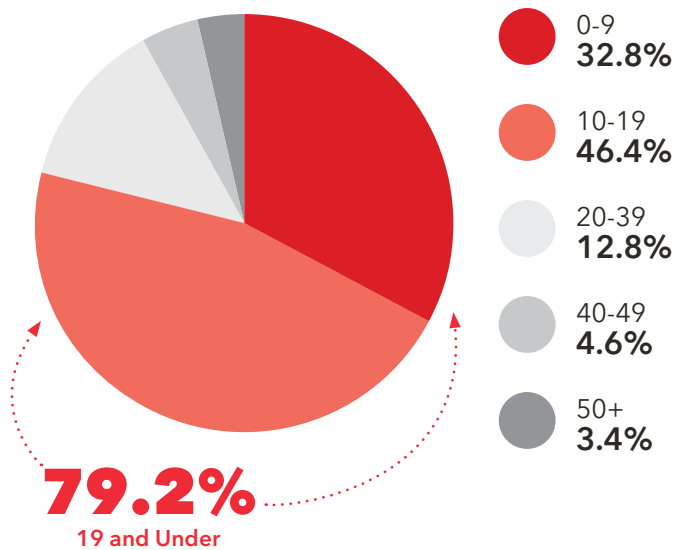


Year-End Demographics

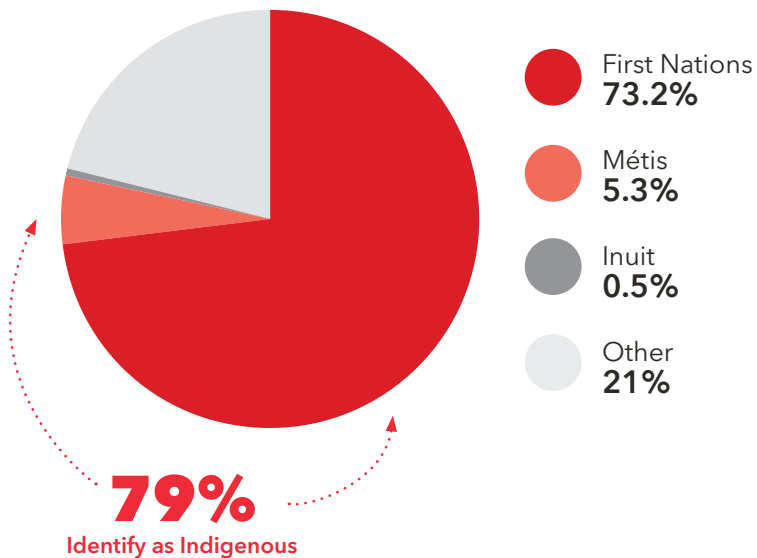
Who uses Wii Chii?

3,531 participants in the 2024-2025 fiscal year

Age Range



Ethnicity



32

Indigenous Program
Facilitators

15

Different Programs

3,249

Visits to our
STEAM Outreach Programs

3,862

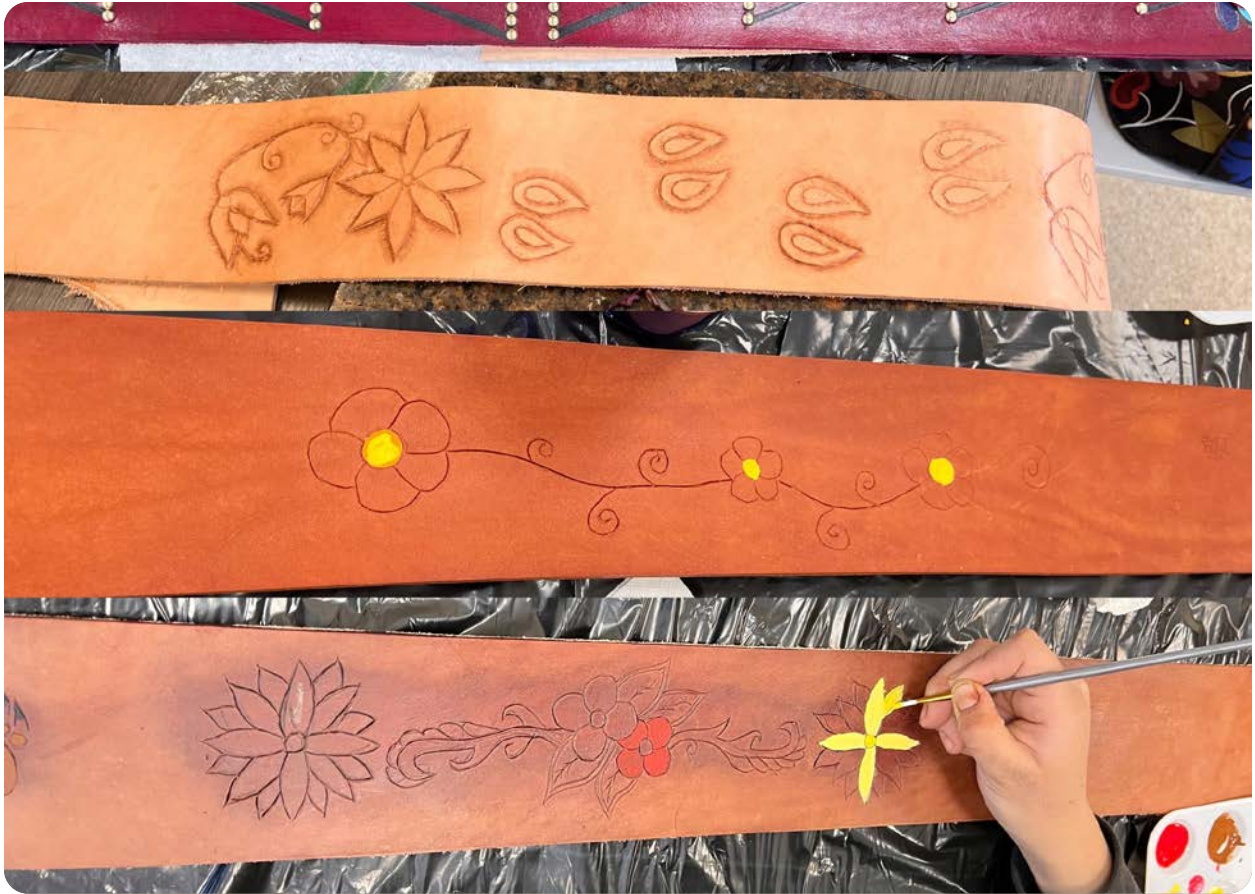
Visits to Language and
Cultural Programming

1,455

Visits to our Community
Outreach Events and Initiatives

56%

of Visitors Identify
as Female



Our Funders

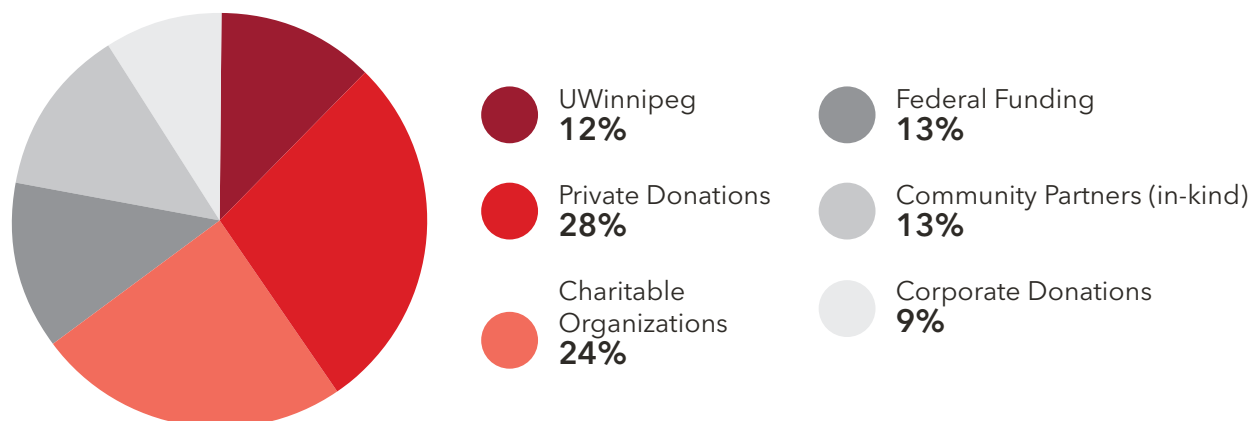
Our initiatives at Wii Chiiwaakanak are supported through diverse channels. Federal funding forms a sturdy foundation, complemented by private donations, charitable organizations, and business contributions. Community partners generously provide in-kind support, while UWinnipeg's commitment adds invaluable strength to our shared endeavors.



How is Wii Chii funded?

Total funding in the 2023-24 fiscal year: **346,893**

Funding Percentages



28%

Funded by Donation

50,000 - 99,999

Canada

Kingfisher
Foundation

10,000-24,999

Zeeba Loxley

<9,999

The McGrane-Pearson Endowment
Fund held at Vancouver Foundation

Diversity and Les Marmiton

UWinnipeg Faculty, Staff, Students,
Retirees, and Alumni

UWinnipeg President's Office

25,000-49,999



THE
WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION



UWinnipeg Indigenous
Engagement

Jennifer Roblin
& Friends

Proceeds of UWinnipeg
Foundation's Duff
Roblin Dinner





Our Partners

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



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre

511 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
R3B 1Y8

P 204.258.2951
F 204.783.4992
E wiichii@uwinnipeg.ca

uwinnipeg.ca/wiichii