

## 2023—2024 Oasis 31 st Annual Report

***The Nipawin Oasis respectfully acknowledges that we are on Treaty 6 and very near Treaty 5 Territory. This is the Traditional Territory of the Cree Peoples and the Homeland of the Métis. This area was the travelling route – gathering place and meeting grounds for Indigenous Peoples whose histories, languages, cultures and traditions continue to influence our community today. We are grateful and honoured for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us and who daily share their knowledge, compassion, kindness, understanding and teachings with us at the Oasis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors who we continue to feel their presence at the Oasis and continue to guide us to do what is right.***

***We are dedicated to ensuring that the Spirit and Action of Reconciliation is honoured, respected and acted upon daily at the Oasis in our thoughts, words, and actions.***

***The Vision of the Oasis is:***

***Our Centre will be a place where people care, belong, and get involved. Our Vision is to be one of the leaders in building an inclusive, supportive, safe and healthy community.***

Welcome to the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre! On behalf of the Nipawin Oasis Board of Directors, we extend our warmest greetings and gratitude for your attendance.

We want to express our appreciation to the Board of Directors for their unwavering support, dedication, and commitment to the success of the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre. Your efforts are instrumental in making a positive impact in our community.

The programs offered by Nipawin Oasis have yielded positive results for our participants, and we are proud to continue offering essential services and support to those in need.

We are grateful for the ongoing financial support from various sources, including the Ministry of Social Services – Family Support Program, Service Canada – Reaching Home Program, Ministry of Education – Child Nutrition Program, SaskCulture – Culture Program, SaskLotteries (TIP)– Youth program and generous donations from the community, across Saskatchewan and Canada. In addition we continue to operate our 7 supportive housing homes for chronic homeless families.

Our dedicated staff continues to navigate the increasing needs in our community with limited resources, and we commend their resilience and dedication.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

About the Oasis Centre.....	3
Directors/Employees .....	3
Mission/Vision.....	4
History.....	4
Programs & Supports.....	6
Statistics.....	7
What Happens at the Oasis....	8
Family Support Program .....	9
Reaching Home Program ..	12
Nutrition Program .....	15
Culture Program.....	17
Elder Louisa Buck .....	18
Fundraising Raffle.....	21
Difference made.....	22
Funders, donors.....	25

If you would like more information please email [nipoasis1@sasktel.net](mailto:nipoasis1@sasktel.net) or call 306-862-5551. we also have a website [www.nipawinoasis.com](http://www.nipawinoasis.com).

Please like us on Facebook :) Always looking for donations and volunteers :):):)

Despite not receiving core funding or property tax relief, increased community donations have made a significant impact on our ability to provide essential services. We maintain a contingency fund to ensure financial stability and have remained debt-free. Our property taxes increased significantly this year and as a result we held a 50-50 raffle that sold \$16,200 worth of tickets enabling us to pay our building taxes of \$9200.

Looking back at our journey, from financial difficulty in 2012 to our current sustainable operation, we recognize the invaluable support of our volunteers, funders, and donors. However, sustaining our operations presents ongoing challenges, especially regarding staffing costs.

To ensure continuity, we must plan for future leadership transitions and additional administrative expenses. Our current Executive Director, though essential, is the lowest paid employee, earning \$20/hr up to \$40,000 annually. Replacing her would require an estimated \$70,000, along with \$50,000 for a bookkeeper. While our current surplus can cover short-term needs, long-term sustainability requires exploring alternative funding sources.

We acknowledge the need and importance of core funding, support from the Town of Nipawin, and property tax relief to sustain our operations and continue serving the community effectively.

As we face future challenges, including the growing need in our community, we remain committed to our mission, vision, values and grateful for the trust and support of our participants, funders, volunteers, and donors.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the success of Nipawin Oasis, making it a valuable and indispensable organization in our community.

Joy Hanson – Executive Director  
Debbie Peifer- President





## WHAT IS THE OASIS COMMUNITY CENTRE?

The Nipawin Oasis is a community resource centre that provides cultural, prevention, educational, and intervention programming, services, support and employment opportunities to the community of Nipawin and area in Northeast Saskatchewan. Approximately 200 individuals use the centre weekly.

The Centre operates its activities and conducts its affairs under the Co-operatives, 1996 Act and is registered with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice with the Corporation Branch. The Community Centre is also registered with the Government of Canada with the Canada Revenue Agency as a registered charity. There are no dividends or interest on share capital to the members or patrons and no part of the surplus is to benefit the members or patrons.

The Board of Directors serve in a solely volunteer capacity of the Co-operative and are elected from the membership. The board meets monthly along with the advisory committee to review the Co-operative's financials, mission and objectives while identifying potential risks and opportunities in consultation with stakeholders. The direction determined guides the operations of programs and services in the development of plans and annual goals.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023/24

#### President

Deborah Peifer

#### Vice—President

Lindsey Kosedy

#### Treasurer/Secretary

Jean Hosaluk

#### Directors:

Alis Larson

Drann Mckay

Janet Shinkewski

Ashley Dayton Banman

### EMPLOYEES (2023/24) (CURRENT)

#### Executive Director

Joy Hanson

#### Homelessness and Housing Coordinator

Leigh Landry

#### Program Support Workers

Serena Garvin

Melisa Bear

Regina Ironstar

Cheryl Leader

#### P/T Program Support Workers

Brendon Mckay

Ethan Head

Kristen Whitehead—Mckay

#### Cultural Leaders

Mary Dussion

Ellen Merasty

Brenda Garvin

Harriet Burns



## VISION AND MISSION

### **Our Vision:**

Our Centre will be a place where people care, belong, and get involved. Our Vision is to be one of the leaders in building an inclusive, supportive, safe and healthy community.

### **Our Mission:**

We are a Community Resource Co-operative Centre that provides cultural, prevention, educational, and intervention programming, services, support and employment opportunities to the community of Nipawin and area in Northeast Saskatchewan.

We strive to provide opportunities and **CHOICES** along with the values of:

Caring, supportive, non-judgemental, and respectful, using a

Holistic approach that promotes wellness and that provides

Opportunities and uses as its guides

Integrity which is accountable, transparent and responsible valuing a

Community that works together and that is

Effective in meeting the needs of the community and provides

Security within a safe, respectful, supportive environment.

Our programming focus is on **CRAFTS** which also serves as a strong foundation for the cultural, personal and leadership development of the youth, individuals and families

Caring and Culture  
Relationships



Action  
Food and Fun  
Teamwork and Time  
Safety and Security

***Providing opportunities through Positive CHOICES***

## HISTORY

The concept for the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre originated in response to a request for additional recreational and social opportunities for the people with long term mental illness in the area. A need for more specific counseling services in the areas of nutrition, budgeting and life skills was also identified. The idea for a “drop-in-centre” offering social and recreational opportunities, a self-help group and some counseling services for the individuals was proposed by Lyle Adderly and MaryLou Hamilton.

The possibility of sharing with other groups in the community was raised. An initial proposal was drafted and presented at a series of meetings with representatives of health, social and educational services, user groups, Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the RCMP and other citizens’ groups.

In November 1992, the Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative came into being. The president was Gabriella Orban, Secretary - Marylou Hamilton, along with Mel McCorriston, Lyle L. Adderley, Barbara A Bryant-Anstie, Robert T. Cecil Walker, Dave Morrison?

Programming was offered at various locations in Nipawin over the following years. Elsie Peters requested space for a trial Collective Kitchen, which was successful and has been continued with various facilitators over the years. Handi works brought a group of developmentally challenged adults to the Centre prior to obtaining their own facility. Youth Kitchens were started and met another community need. The additional programs meant that the Centre moved several times, always into a bigger facility.

Funding provided by HRDC assisted us to purchase and make some renovations to a building of our very own. The HOMES committee was formed and the Oasis Management Committee and guided us throughout this initiative. The official Grand Opening of this building was held on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2004. The Kids First program for this area moved into the new building, also a Youth Worker hired by the School Division set up office space. In 2005-2006 Kids First and the youth worker were moved to other premises.

### **Programs, supports and services offered through the years**

#### **Building and Supportive Housing Homes:**

Purchase current building – 2004 – present - expanding in 2017

Built 4 sheds – 2013-15

Replaced appliances – fridge, freezer, stoves – 2, dishwasher – 2013-14

Repaired roof – 20014-15

Replaced some of the windows and doors – 2014-17

Replaced flooring – 2015-17 Adding an addition 50 x 24 - 2017

7 Supportive Housing Homes—2020—present

#### **Vehicles:**

Donation of Elks van – 2009—2015 (retired)

Purchased 15 passenger van – 2015 (in use)

Purchased ( 3) 7 passenger vans – 2014-16 (in use)

Purchased (1) 7 passenger van—2022 (in use)

**Programs:**

Mental Health Support Program - 2006 – 2019

Housing/Tenant Program – 2007-2008

Trustee Program – 2006 – 2011

Grocery Club – 2006 – 2011

**Youth and Family Kitchen and Culture program - 2006 – present**

Corrections and Public Safety/ Crime Prevention Program in 2008-09

**Youth and Family Support Program – 2012 - present**

MMIW program— 2022\_23

**Homelessness and Housing Program and Supports – 2014 – present**

**Supports:**

**Drop In Support services & Emergent Needs – 2005 – present**

**Giveaway Shed – 2014 – present**

**Garden at the Oasis – 2013 - present**

**Phone, Fax, Printer, Resumes, Landlord Lists, Application assistance – 2005-present**

**Employment:**

Odd Job program – 2005 - 2012

Employment program & Life Skills (CanSask) – 2006 - 2012

**Education:**

Transitions to Employment Program – 2005 – 2006

Diabetic Strategy 2009-2011

Leadership & Better Life Program – 2010-2011

Family Literacy Program and Hub – 2012 – 2019

Women and Girls Exploring Trades Program – 2012– 2017

Residential and Renovation Construction Program – 2014-15

**Culture:**

**Culture program – 2010 - present**

Oskayak Girls group 2011 - 2013

Bridging Cultures – Indigenous to Non-Indigenous – 2012-14

Youth Community Inclusion program – 2014-16

National Aboriginal Day Celebration and Culture Days – 2013 - 2020

North American Indigenous Games Lance Ceremony – July 2015

**Business Ventures:**

Mail Run – 2005 - 2014

Affordable store – 2005 – 2006

Bike Shop 2005 - 2009

Janitorial business and Catering – 2008 - 2013

Taxi business – 2010 – 2015

2023—2024  
OASIS PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS

*Family Support Program*  
*Youth and Family Nutrition Program*  
*Culture Program*  
*Homelessness & Drop in Support Services*  
*Supportive Housing Program*



STATISTICS 2023\_24

<b># of Homeless - couch surfing and street as of March 2024</b>	193	<b># of Unhoused families as of March 2024</b>	45
<b>Meals Delivered/Served</b>	5760 – CNP \$11,805 4,200—IPRF \$9,248	<b>Food bags given out and emergent needs 10-20 daily</b>	\$30,000 donations from community and donors
<b>Youth Kitchens</b>	80 sessions (480 participants)	<b>Parent/Child Nutrition classes</b>	300 – CNP (1200 participants)
<b>Community Kitchen</b>	12 sessions (120 participants)	<b>Culture Programming (1-3 times weekly)</b>	2500 participants throughout year
<b>Families/Individuals housed</b>	11 families 7 individual total 42 people 2 evictions	<b># Mandated direct service hours— Family Support— total for year</b>	673 hrs
<b>Nutrition program participants</b>	500	<b># Diversion direct service hours Family Support— total for year</b>	3348 hrs
<b># of Families we worked with this year</b>	150	<b>Family Support Program # of Families per month</b>	55 - 65 families
<b># of Individuals we worked with this year</b>	700	<b>Individual Families we worked with in FSP</b>	109 families

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE OASIS?

Social Media Facebook page 1600 followers

### Articles in Nipawin Journal this year

<https://www.nipawinjournal.com/news/cree-elder-98-crafts-stunning-moose-hide-jacket>

<https://www.nipawinjournal.com/news/oasis-for-the-most-vulnerable-of-nipawin>

<https://www.nipawinjournal.com/news/tremendous-support-for-nipawin-oasis-community-centre>

<https://www.nipawinjournal.com/news/nipawin-oasis-launches-50-50-lottery-to-pay-property-tax-bill-on-centre>

<https://www.nipawinjournal.com/news/interest-in-metis-craft-grows-in-nipawin>



We sometimes hear people asking what goes on at the Oasis? Here is a sample of our weekly programming. Unfortunately our programming is limited to the families and Elders we are working with due to limited space and funding. We work on average with 55-65 families a month, take on new participants only when we have an availability that is based on the need and our capacity at the time. We also have additional programming that are home visits, parenting supports, youth programming, kitchens and housing/homeless supports. So as you can see we are very active and have a strong demand for the supports and services we provide.

### A Sample of a Week at the Oasis

Tuesday 11-3 Women's Support Group ( children welcome) Cree prayer, mindful eating lunch, mocasin making, beading and door prize (food box)

Wednesday 12-4 Painting with Horton Severight - Adults/Youth 10 & up with a caregiver - snacks and door prize (food box) limit of 10 - please message if attending

Thursday 11-3 Women's Support Group (babies only - under 1) Cree prayer, Mindful eating lunch, beading, games (cards or Bingo?), talking circle - topic mindful eating with a piece of chocolate, exercise and door prize (food box)



Message if you need a ride for any of the programs. Thankyou



## FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Family Support Program has been funded for a 10th year by the Ministry of Social Services under two contracts, mandated and diversion, to provide support, services and parenting education to families.

We offer wrap around services in the Family Support Program. We have seen our demand and need for the supports and services continue to increase this year and are working with anywhere from 55-65 families a month, both in Mandated and Diversion.

**The Family Support Program support workers** are: Melisa Bear, Serena Garvin, Gina Ironstar, Cheryl Leader, who are providing assistance in the healthy development and support of families and children in the Northeast area by completing home, office visits, and phone calls. The Family Support Program has been busy with training— in house sessions to continuously improve on services provided to families. This year we are continuing to develop numerous work-books to work with our families such as Child Development, Anger Management, Parenting, Communication skills, Stress management, Relapse Prevention, ADHD, Family Violence, Grief, Respect in the Home, Budgeting and Goal Setting, Positive Discipline, Ages and Stages and Traditional Parenting.



**The Family Support Program goals are:**

To maintain the family unit and well-being of the child or children

To enhance family wellness

To empower families

To ease reunification between children in care and their families In Addition our goals:

To increase the strength and resilience of families while respecting and supporting their culture and traditions.

To support parents as they help their children with special needs achieve their full potential.

We assist the families with making connections with other resources in the community and online.

We do fun and recreational activities that support the entire family. We host two women support groups weekly – one with children and one with only women.





Hello, My name is Regina, but would rather be called Gina. I am married with 6 beautiful children. We moved to Nipawin almost 4 years ago. I started working at Oasis in June 2023. I love the work environment at Oasis, it doesn't feel like a job to me, it feels like we are one big family. I love what Oasis has to offer to the community. I have always wanted to help people in my life ever since I was little. I am very thankful to Joy for giving me this opportunity to be apart of the Oasis Team.



Hi my name is Cheryl Leader and I am a family support worker at the Nipawin Oasis. Nipawin is my home town but I currently live on a farm north of Love. I live there with my husband and many animals. This job is very rewarding because you get to make a difference in other lives everyday. I absolutely love working here and feel extremely blessed to be given the opportunity to be here. The Oasis makes you feel like we are all one big family.



My name is Serena Garvin I am a family support worker, I am from Red Earth but I have lived in Nipawin for most of my life. I started working with the Oasis a youth coordinator, then I became a family support worker; this job has helped me grow into the person I am now. I've enjoyed meeting new people, families and children. I've connected well with a lot of families through activities such as kitchens, the youth programming and within women's support groups.



Hi my name is Kristen McKay I am a casual worker at the Oasis. I am a mom of 7 beautiful children. Oasis has always been there for me and my family. I enjoy coming to the Oasis and helping out, being around all the great people and having a sense of belonging.

I am a mother of 6 and a grandmother of 5. I have been working at Oasis since 2020. I am a family support worker. I enjoy spending time at work. I call it my home away from home or my second home. Through Oasis, I have found my path, my journey on the red road. My first time on the Red Road, I immersed myself in ceremonies and pow-wows to learn all I could. Going on my 3 years of Sundance. One more year and the sense of accomplishment within reach is so exciting. I take clients to sweats during the winter and young girls to pow wows to dance, during the summer. I do kitchens, programming, and mental health check-ins. We have an amazing team that works together to provide an excellent service to our community.. ekosi Melisa Bear





## REACHING HOME PROGRAM

The supports to be offered are as follows:

- Supportive Housing for Families – Oasis owns 7 supportive housing homes for chronically homeless families.
- Non-residential facilities – Oasis Centre assists with drop-in services, housing supports and transportation.
- Housing services and Housing placements – assist with securing housing, needed supports, tenant and landlord services.
- Emergency Housing Funding – to cover costs while awaiting benefits.
- Prevention and Shelter diversion – help obtaining or retaining housing.
- Advice on budgeting and money management program.
- Advocacy to avert eviction – short-term financial assistance to help avert eviction or loss of housing with rent, rental arrears, utility deposits and payments.
- Emergency assistance – food, clothing, transportation, damage repair
- Client Support Services – Cultural supports, life skills, link to detox and treatment centres, shelters, assistance with obtaining ID, income assistance, employment, resumes, odd jobs, employment skills, use of phone, fax and computer access.

Beneficiaries: Homeless or those at risk of homeless to individuals in Nipawin and area.

We continue to maintain our 7 supportive housing homes by providing intensive supports to the families in these homes. Supports include crisis intervention, budgeting, home safety, how your home works education, family supports, job training and job experience, assistance with obtaining income from SIS and CTB, garbage removal, lawn care, and emergent needs.

Our tenants have only one bill and that is rent. The utilities, furnishings, home phone and wifi are included. This assists with reducing stressors for the tenants so they can concentrate on increasing their wellbeing, parenting and working on future goals.

We provide people with landlord lists, housing applications, assist in filling the forms out and faxing or mailing at no cost. We assist daily with emergent needs such as food and hygiene items, and have seen a significant increase of requests this fiscal year.

We have provided job skill building, casual employment opportunities and time management skills to individuals who participate in our programming.

**Eviction prevention** has continued to be one of our main focuses. We assisted in preventing eviction by providing supports and services such as providing advocacy for individuals at risk of being evicted, education to tenants on their rights when it comes to eviction, provided cleaning supplies, assisted with cleaning and skill building for those who struggle in this area. We work closely with Nipawin Housing Authority by providing supportive housing to some of the tenants at risk of eviction. We have paid outstanding utility bills, damage deposits as well as rent arrears to prevent eviction and under extenuating circumstances such as loss of income. We help families by doing personal monthly budgets, learning how to set boundaries with family and friends, assisting with yard maintenance and assist with the maintenance and repairs in the home to prevent eviction while building these skills through teaching. We continue to assist with hauling garbage to prevent eviction and surcharges. This is needed due to the overcrowding situation in many of the homes and having 1 garbage bin every 2 weeks. We also spend a considerable amount of time assisting with SIS requirements and CRA/CCB to prevent income cut off or reinstatement of benefits.

## REACHING HOME PROGRAM CONTINUED

We assisted with damages to homes, emergent medical needs, emergent gas vouchers to transport the homeless, washing machines, dryers, fridges and stoves all from community donation, garbage removal, hygiene items, pest control supplies, footwear, household items and furniture, cleaning supplies, blankets, tables and chairs, emergent nutrition, pillows, cultural leaders, printing supplies for workbooks, lights, snow removal, we purchased beds, bed covers, cultural supplies, jackets, hats and mitts to assist families, homeless and couch surfing individuals as warm winter attire is very needed. We continue to receive an overwhelming amount of community support from donations of clothing, household items, diapers, food, and cash donations, all of which go directly to families and individuals with none being spent on wages or operations of the Oasis.

We attended the homelessness conference put on by Métis Nation Saskatchewan in February 2024, our Homeless Coordinator enjoyed the experience and networking with other professionals in the field. Lots of knowledge and ideas were shared and some new things to consider for our community approach have been discussed. We have been in numerous articles in the paper regarding homelessness in our area.

The key impacts are the supports and services we provided as they continue to improve the quality of life of the individuals we support. Our approach of meeting people where they are at paired with our wrap around supports has been a key to our success. We assist individuals and families obtain ID, and applying for the appropriate income assistance program. We are providing anger management, stress management and addiction relapse programming for individuals receiving supportive housing services when we have the capacity to do so. We have such a high demand for our supports and services that it can be overwhelming at times to meet the need and requests.



Hi my name is Leigh Landry I am the Housing and Homeless Coordinator for the Nipawin Oasis. I am originally from Toronto, Ontario, but have been in Saskatchewan for 11 years. I have three beautiful adult daughters who all have made Nipawin their home. My partner is from Love sask which led me here to the area. I feel very blessed to be a part of such an amazing community organization and to have the privilege to work with such a great group of people who all have the most beautiful souls. I am passionate about helping those who are the most vulnerable in our community and seek to ensure adequate, fair and safe housing for everyone.



My name is Ethan Head I'm from Red Earth Cree Nation. I'm married with 3 kids. The work environment at Oasis is always fun and adventurous. I love my job and working for Oasis, I learn something new everyday. From carpentry, mechanics to plumbing. It is a great experience to learn all of these things. Oasis is like my home away from home.

Hi my name is Brendon McKay I'm from Red Earth First Nation, I like to work at Oasis because I learn new things, my favourite job to do is mowing lawns. I like that I get to meet new people . I am happy to work at the Oasis, we are one big happy family.



Follow

Leigh Landry · Sep 27, 2023 · 🌐

Giveaway today at the Oasis! On til 3pm come check it out 😊



## CHILD AND FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM

Funded from Ministry of Education—Child Nutrition Program and Indigenous People’s Resilience Fund. This funding was used to support the afterschool/summer youth program and family kitchen programming. This funding was used for transportation costs (pick up youth at school/home and bring them home), food costs (snack and supper meal), and supplies. It also included an understanding of basic nutrition; safe food handling, cleanliness, hygiene, meal planning; budgeting, shopping, storing, and preparing food. We also incorporated literacy in the program. Learned about various plants, where food comes from, nutritional value, how to take care of a garden, harvesting and preserving. We assisted families that are in poverty with seeds, garden tools and knowledge to assist with planting their own garden at home. We also rototilled gardens for families at no charge.



**Parent/Child Nutrition Classes** - Family kitchens at the Oasis and in their homes. Parents and their children were involved in the preparation, budgeting, shopping, cooking, and cleanup. Skills taught were safe food handling, sanitation, preserving, budgeting and nutrition. This program was very popular.

**Community Kitchen** - We held a session once a month due to the high number of food insecurity for low income families for 120 participants.

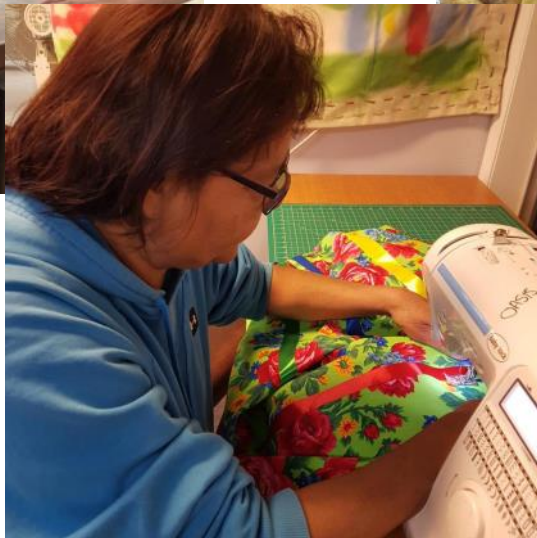
Reality is the people we work with do not enough income for food let alone nutritious food. The program is very successful as it is. We just need more time, space and \$ to fill the need. Partnering is difficult due to insufficient admin, time, and resources. The community has been tremendous this year in supporting us financially and with food donations.



### **TIP grant - \$3750 – Sask Lotteries**

The Nipawin Oasis youth culture, recreation and literacy project followed a holistic, intergenerational, cultural and strength based approach working with youth that are vulnerable and at risk. It included drop in and scheduled activities, bridging youth to existing community programs and sports, leadership development, Cree culture and language, sewing, crafting, painting, beading, medicine picking, drumming and traditional dancing, attending sweats, attending powwows and cultural camps, community inclusion, health and wellness, literacy and social skills. It also included physical activity through swimming, sports, hiking, outdoor cooking, regional park and other activities. We also provided mental health and social supports to manage conflict, feelings of isolation and assisted with building self esteem and self confidence. We held several sessions where we rented the pool for family swim sessions.







## CULTURE AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION PROGRAM

We were fortunate to receive funding for three years. This funding was for culture retention through preserving the traditions of the area through weekly programming, workshops, sewing, beading, medicine picking, and traditional teachings.

We held weekly cultural programming Tues and Thursdays from 11-4 weekly. This program was for women and children. It included sewing, beadwork, moccasin and wrap around making, lanyards, traditional food preparations, regalia making, ribbon skirts, star blankets, mossbags, bonnets, medicine picking and teachings, Elder services, Cree language, cultural teachings of the teepee, sweat lodge ceremonies, sundance ceremony, medicine picking, fishing, Indigenous ways of knowing, talking circles and wellness sessions.

We see an increased interest in beading and making moccasins and baby wrap arounds every year. We are fortunate that so many of the participants are Cree speakers and the language is shared daily.



## Elder Louisa Buck at 98 sews beaded jacket



Author of the article from the Nipawin Journal Rob O'Flanagan Published Sep 17, 2023 98-year-old Cree elder Louisa Buck

Cree elder Louisa Buck was going through the many pieces of moose hide and the countless beads she has accumulated over the years.

They seemed to call out to her, she said.

Buck, 98 years old, has a special relationship with moose hide, having learned to clean and tan the animal skin as a small child growing up in Treaty 5 territory in northwest Saskatchewan, near Cumberland House Cree Nation. Her mother taught her to make many things, including moccasins, mittens and jackets. She made countless jackets over the years, starting when she was a child. Moose hide is her favourite material to work with.

For perhaps one more time, she recently completed another piece of work. Buck, who lives in Nipawin, decided in the spring to fashion a special jacket out of her pieces of moose hide, adorning it with traditional frills and elaborate floral beadwork. After working on it for weeks, she finished it in July.

“I made that jacket because I had a bunch of nice coloured beads, and I made up my mind to make that jacket and use them,” she said through her friend Harriet Burns, who translated from Cree.

“My momma taught me how to sew,” she added. “I started sewing at seven years old. As a kid, I would rather bead than go and play.”

Asked through the translator what she recalled about her childhood, she said that although she contracted whooping cough when she was small, she was always healthy and happy.

“I was born in the bush, I don’t know where,” Buck said “I was born on a trapline, somewhere north of Cumberland.”

Growing up, Buck never attended school. As a child, she was to be sent to a residential school in Manitoba, either Lake St. Martin Residential School or Mackay Residential School in The Pas. But the school burned down before she was sent there, she said.

She added that there was a Catholic school in the town of Cumberland House that accepted Métis children, but did not accept “treaty Indians.”

Buck learned her skills from her family, community and through hard work. The habit of hard work, she said, has never left her. It is what kept her strong and gave her a long life.

“When my mom passed away when I was eight, I took care of my dad from that day on,” she said. “I worked hard washing clothes on a washboard and scrubbing floors.”

While she is not sure she would have the energy to make another jacket — she gets very tired doing the work these days — she is pleased with the way it turned out. She called it an accomplishment, especially given that she is still sewing and beading at nearly 100.

Throughout her life, Buck has had many opportunities to teach a younger generation the beading and sewing skills she knows. Renowned in the northwest for her teaching, she has continued to pass her knowledge on.

“I’m getting tired now,” she said. “Maybe it’s time to retire.”



My name is Harriet Burns originally from Cumbeland House, married into James Smith. I first came to the Oasis in 2013, my friend invited me here to come do an interview because Joy was looking for a cultural leader. I was hired here and I worked at the Oasis for 3-4 years. I continued coming to the Oasis after because I loved the environment. I made a lot of new friends here. I also call it my second home because it is a place of healing, meditating and therapy through beading, sewing etc. I also like all the culture programs that was offered through the years, the improvement of the building and it is just a joyful feeling when I come to the Oasis. Thankyou

My name is Mary Dussion. I am 71 years old and originally from Cumberland House. In 2014 I started beading and sewing. How I started was from Harriet Burns at the Oasis. Since then I have learned how to make ribbon skirts, bonnets, moss bags, star blankets, lanyards, earrings, rings, moccasins, and baby wrap arounds.

What I enjoy about the Oasis is going there to be with my friends, visiting, sharing and learning from each other. We teach each other what we know.

I feel at home there and enjoy that feeling. The best part is Joy has been there and has been so welcoming and always take time to listen to us and even though she is busy she will leave what she is doing to help us out in different ways.

I really want to thank all those that donate in different ways and want to thank them all and that everything is so appreciated.



Hello my name is Brenda Garvin and I am the program cook AKA The Bannock queen. I am grateful that I am a part of the Oasis, it has helped me a lot by getting me out of my shell. I have made a lot of new friends and enjoy coming to the Oasis. I have been able to help people learn the Cree language as I speak Cree fluently. I love getting to share that with my Oasis family. Brenda would like to add I have 6 adult children 4 boys and 2 girls. I have 14 beautiful grandchildren who are all gifts in my life.

Hello my name is Ellen Merasty I am originally from Manitoba. I have 5 adult children all graduated. I moved to nipawin about 6 years ago to get away from an unhealthy life. The first time I came to the Oasis to write up a resume and use the computer. Then while talking with Joy I asked what supports and services the oasis offers. Joy gave me a tour and some ladies were there beading. Joy gave me some beads and I used them to bead a lanyard. Somebody was interested in learning my peyote beading. Joy then asked if I would be willing to teach the women to bead peyote style and I said sure. I have been at the oasis ever since and have assisted in teaching the women, men and youth how to bead and make moccasins. Oasis has given me a sense of self worth and self esteem. I have met so many new people who have become like family to me. I have a sense of pride when I see my friends at Oasis learn our culture through our art of beading knowing I taught them. I am grateful to have a place like the Oasis to belong to.





## FUNDRAISING—RAFFLE TO PAY FOR PROPERTY TAXES

We want to thank everyone who supported our 50/50 raffle fundraiser. **We sold \$16,200 worth of tickets with the winner and the Oasis each receiving \$8,100.** The winner has asked us to keep who won confidential. Because we are a charity we receive 25% back of the net profits for an additional \$2,025, we also had Leanne Foreman specifically donate \$500 towards the property taxes. Making for a total of \$10,625.00 raised for the We want to thank everyone who supported our 50/50 raffle fundraiser. We sold \$16,200 worth of tickets with the winner and the Oasis each receiving \$8,100. The winner has asked us to keep who won confidential. Because we are a charity

Nipawin Oasis Property Taxes 2023  
 Nipawin Oasis Community Centre - \$9,153.56  
 Supportive Home #1 - \$1,764.58  
 Supportive Home #2 - \$1,924.46  
 Supportive Home #3 - \$2,239.76  
 Supportive Home #4 - \$2,200.24  
 Supportive Home #5 - \$1,873.26  
 Supportive Home #6 - \$2,037.64  
 Supportive Home #7 - \$2,506.55  
 Total \$23,700.05

Please note we receive no core funding, no funding from the town of Nipawin, no property tax relief, and we are not a business that sells anything. Our supportive housing homes are for low income families that require supports from the Oasis.

we receive 25% back of the net profits for an additional \$2,025, we also had Leanne Foreman specifically donate \$500 towards the property taxes. Making for a total of \$10,625.00 raised for the Oasis

History of funding we used to receive from the town of Nipawin -

2010 - \$15,000  
 2011 - \$20,000  
 2012 - \$15,000  
 2013 - \$15,000  
 2014 - \$19,000  
 2015 - \$15,000  
 2016 - \$10,000  
 2017 - \$10,000  
 2018 - \$5,000 capital grant for the addition that we have to amortize over 25 years.



## What difference has the Oasis made to you?

We often hear people say I don't know what the Oasis does actually. Here is a snapshot of the services and supports we provided in the month of January 2024 for families. We worked with 65 families providing 445 hours of direct service and supports. Services provided included parenting support, emergent transportation, cultural supports and supplies, crisis interventions, emergent nutrition, family kitchens, youth literacy, cooking skills, shopping, budgeting, filling out forms and applications, obtaining income, obtaining ID, children's activities, emergent clothing, housing assistance, eviction prevention, garbage removal, furniture donations, home repairs, landlord/tenant relations, cultural ceremonies, use of phone/computer/fax, donations, housing applications, work experience, household items. We regularly work with social services, schools, legal aid, physicians, public health, Nipawin Housing, Salvation Army - food Bank assisting with transportation, community donations and landlords.

*The Oasis feels like home to me and I feel safe*

1) *The Oasis has made a difference to me by showing me how to budget properly and manage more properly and be more independent. (mother with 5 children)*

*I like that we learn about our Culture and are able to speak Cree here.*

2) *Oasis has been there for us every since we started living out here. It's a big help with transportation and everything such as groceries and meeting new people and doing kitchen plus keeping us occupied plus the give away it's a more help as well .. also with the appointments they help us go to them on time .. I enjoy having oasis in our life's (family with 7 children)*

3)Gm 😊 one of the most things I like about the program that we all gather there to associate with family and friends especially our elders and workers, it brings me happiness 😊 and enjoy being there whenever I can and the donation appreciated whenever I need help from the program very happy and I been truly 😊 and always happy to be there 😊 have a blessed day. Forgot to mention learning from our Elders and each other as one family (Grandmother assisting with raising grandchildren)

*The Oasis has helped me find work, they helped me write my resume and gave me work experience and a*

4) *The oasis has made a tremendous difference in the lives of myself and children. Thanks to the oasis we were able to find affordable housing and stability. The oasis has provided ample resources to make that possible. Through the family and cultural programming it provides an environment of acceptance and community. We are very thankful to have an association such as the oasis available to us as I know it's made a great impact on us and everyone it serves (family housed from homelessness)*

5) *Oasis helped me find my hobbies and connect with friends I love going there to learn new things and Get help with things I found a passion for beading and sewing and making moccasins I love going there to bead with my friends and I have a lot of respect for all of the workers There so kind and helpful You guys give me Something to look Forward to Everytime I go there n most of all. You have a nice facility love the dinners. Thank you. For everything. Egosi. Lots of respect.*

*(Grandmother assisting with raising grandchildren)*

## What difference has the Oasis made to you?

6) Oasis had a huge impact in my journey to sobriety, I'm taught many hobbies and motivation to keep going.. my baby and I love coming to the centre. We enjoy making new friends in the centre as well. (Unhoused mother with 2 young children - working part time)

7) I've been coming to the oasis since I was a teenager, my sister every since she was a young kid. The oasis has done so many things for us. It helped me come out of my comfort zone. I was able to have more confidence and try new things. As it also gave me the skills to work. I got to help the oasis out with the kids, which inspired me to work in childcare. For my sister she gained confidence to do more activities. She also made some great friends that she grew with. We love the oasis. It has helped so many families, so many adults and kids. The oasis has helped people get to know their selves. It brought culture to us as well as arts like painting, beading and more. They taught us how to cook healthy meals for our loved ones. The oasis inspired us to want to be better, they show us so much respect. I truly love oasis and I am so grateful to have them in the community. ( mother with one child Oasis supportive housing)

**The Oasis helped me get a home for me and my children. I couldn't have done it without their help.**

**I like coming to the Oasis because I feel like I have a place to make friends.**

8) How has the oasis made a difference for me was the support I have gotten from them. I was struggling at home for awhile (cleaning & parenting wise) & they helped me as soon as I met them. We appreciate the support they gave me and my 4 sons. My son was out of school for five months and my support workers from oasis helped me fight for him to return & Now he is finally back in school. The difference I see is my mental health gotten better as my house been decluttered and staying clean (thanks for them helping me declutter junk and helping me with cleaning supplies) and the reassurance of my parenting as a single mother of four sons. I'm so thankful for the help we got the past few months I feel like I can move forward positively because I don't feel the struggle as bad as when I met them I appreciate them for that.

**I come to the Oasis to talk to the people there about my problems.**

9) Oasis made a big difference in my life starting with giving us a home to call our own....helping me get my kids back...keeping my family together and most of all helped me get out of a place I never thought I'd get out of.... ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ I could say lots but this sums it all up and thank you 😊 🙏

10) Oasis has made it easier for me in my day to day life. Working with a family support worker as a single mom has lifted so much stress for me and I'm so very thankful that you guys are there for the support. 🗨️ you guys have helped me with furniture when I moved into my new place last year and have helped get me out of my shell with the women's group (sorry haven't been there lately because of work) but it is great. Thank you for all that you do. 🗨️

**I come to the Oasis because they give me odd jobs when they can.**

**I have been getting a lot of support from the Oasis and on how to be a parent. I have learned how to budget and shop and save money.**

11) Oasis has made a great impact on my mental health and well being ,,so grateful to have the oasis ! Thanks for the opportunity and support I get 💕

12)Hi. I'll take time to express my feelings. I first heard about the oasis in 2013. My friend recommended I come and see Joy. The rest is history. Lol. Anyway it had become my second home. And positive things happen here. I grew to love the people I met there and worked with in the past. As I got busier, I love going there to rejuvenate my spirit. Ekosi pitama. Before I write a book. Lol. Tapwe keetchi, my oasis family. Much love and respect.

**You helped me when nobody else would and for that I am grateful**

**Because of you I was able to get my ID, open a bank account and get an income**

13)So beautiful to read!! I hope all the families know how much they mean to the oasis! As a worker I have grown as a person in so many ways, all of the beautiful people I get to interact with every day have helped me more than they will ever know. The sense of belonging, cultural experiences, learning from our elders, laughs and even the tears are priceless. Love my Oasis family!

Blessed beyond words to get to have all of you in my life 💕

**I appreciate all the rides you have given me it is difficult for me to walk**

14) The oasis has helped me get out of the house, its my social outing. I learned how to do beadwork there, oasis helps me out a lot with beading supplies, i've been taking up sewing, a few years ago i learned how to make starblankets there, i'll be starting to make them again. I'm really liking the self care program, and especially the sharing/healing circle. The give aways have been great too, i have a lot of nice clothes from there, us ladies have fun 'shopping' lol. The staff is wonderful, i feel at home there. I don't know what i would do if there was no oasis, rain or shine or snow i'm there.

**I want to thank you for all of the donations—my Oasis wardrobe—I don't know what I would do without you**



**Thanks for helping me plant a garden, I am so excited**





# THANKYOU :) FUNDERS, PARTNERS AND DONORS 2023-2024



**2023—2024 Donations for a total of \$23,079.31 (100% of the donations go towards emergent needs, food for the participants (unless specified otherwise by the donors) No \$ is spent on rent, administration, salaries or transportation.**

- Kennedy Reimer
- Brenna Marinier
- Garry & Gloria Schenstead
- Jelise Schmitt
- Ron Nickel
- SaskPower— Ken Hanson—Employee Volunteer
- Ecole Notre Dame Des Vertus
- Ken and Joy Hanson
- Anne Lockhart
- Lorraine Holmen
- Eileen M. Fogarty
- Terry & Joanne Samchyk
- Charlene & Keith Tourand
- V. Boughen
- Jean Perkins
- Maureen Kawa-Hanson
- Karinne Seiferling
- Garry Debiegne
- Lee-Anne Foreman—Hanson
- Benevity Community Impact Fund—Anonymous Donation
- Delphine Dame
- JerBear Books Ltd.
- Eleanor Rourke
- Eileen Isbister
- Rodney & Hazel Peterson
- Lake Country Cooperative
- Sask Energy
- Norman and Joanne Thomson
- Sask. Union of Nurses
- Diamond North Credit Union—Nipawin
- Marlon Zacharias Enterprises
- Sask. Union of Nurses—local #264
- Janine Brooks Jean
- Fyrne Hanson
- St. Johns Anglican Church
- Nipawin Kinsmen Club
- Nipawin Kinette Club
- Calgary Foundation
- Sasktel Employees donation



Please note that on the next few pages is a snapshot of some of the donations we received this year. Unfortunately we could not put everyone in this report but they are on our facebook page.

We want to thank Levi for his generosity and thoughtfulness who with half of his birthday money bought food for the Nipawin Oasis.

His kindness and thoughtfulness are truly admirable. It's gestures like these that remind us of the power of generosity and the importance of helping others in our communities.

Thankyou also to Lisa for assisting with making this donation possible ❤️



**Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative Ltd.**

Oct 3, 2023 · 🌐

We want to thank Russ Hall and family for the very generous donation of squash and tomatoes 🍅 Thankyou for thinking of us.



We are very thankful to Mayor Marlon Zacharius of Aerus for his kindness and generous donation of \$500 for the Nipawin Oasis. 100% of this donation will go towards food for the people we work with no \$ will be spent on rent, administration, salaries, and transportation. Thankyou for your support and for thinking of us 😊

<https://www.facebook.com/aerus.sk?mibextid=REKXMA>

We are very grateful for the generosity of SaskTel's TelCare program (Prince Albert) "where the SaskTel employees reach out to their communities, caring for individuals and families, through such worthwhile organizations, such as yours. It is our hope that this invaluable relationship can continue for many years to come." we received \$780 from the SaskTel TelCare Employer Charity trust (Prince Albert District) and \$390 from SaskTel. 100% of this donation will go towards people we work with for food or emergent needs . No \$ will be spent on salaries, admin, rent or transportation. Thank you to SaskTel and its employees for your kindness, generosity and for thinking of us.



**Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative Ltd.**

Jan 19 · 🌐

We want to thank Karinne Seiferling of "The Spot" restaurant in Nipawin for donating their bottles/cans to go towards our property taxes. \$250.30 was collected. Thankyou Karinne for your support, kindness, thoughtfulness and generosity. :):):)

we are amazed always by the generosity and support from Jessica Brost of Northeast EMS. Thank you to you and your family for this tremendous donation and your ongoing support. This will help so many thank you for your kindness, generosity, time, thoughtfulness, and for thinking of us and the people we work with. Much love to you, Jessica and your family. Have a very merry Christmas and safe holiday. We appreciate all the care, service work and dedication that you and your team provide to all of us. You are an inspiration!! And are LOVED ❤️ ❤️ ❤️



Still the season of giving with a donation from the Nipawin Kinsmen where Tyson was selected Kinsman of the month and he chose the \$100 donation to go towards the Nipawin Oasis. 100% this donation will go towards food and emergent needs for the people we work with. No \$ will be spent on salaries, rent, admin, and or transportation. Thank you so much Tyson for thinking of us and to the rest of the Nipawin Kinsmen Club for your generosity. You are an amazing club and WE Thankyou for all the work you do for the community.



We want to thank St John's Anglican Church and Garry Schenstead for their generous donation of all kinds of goodies 😊 Thankyou so much for thinking of us 😊



Well today feels like Christmas came early with a wonderful generous donation from the Diamond North Credit Union in Nipawin 😊 toques, mitts and \$1000.00. 100% of this donation will go towards food and emergent needs for people we work with that are in need. No \$ will be spent on salaries, admin, rent or transportation. Thankyou so much for thinking of us 😊 you are appreciated!

<https://www.facebook.com/DiamondNorthCreditUnion?mibextid=REkXMA>



We are amazed, thankful, grateful for the kindness and generosity of Keshia Nickel and Rachel Funk to the Nipawin Oasis 😊  
 "We put on a trade show with the funds from the vendors and a \$2 donation entry fee. We used the money to buy what you were in need of. The total was \$690 raised and we hope to make it an annual event"  
 Thank you so much for thinking of us. You are loved and appreciated!!!



We want to thank the Nipawin Kinettes and Centre Street Drugs for their monthly contribution of the hygiene products. Much appreciated! Thankyou for thinking of us 😊



**Nipawin Oasis Community Centre Co-operative Ltd.**

Aug 30, 2023 · 🌐

We would like to thank Wayne Nickel of JerBear Books for his very generous donation towards food. 100% of this donation will be spent on food and no \$ will be spent on administration, salaries, transportation or rent. Thankyou so much for thinking of us :) <https://>

We are very grateful to Lake country co-op for being one of the recipients for their "Every child matters" fundraiser. Nipawin Oasis received \$3290.89. 100% of this donation will go towards the children and youth's emergent needs. No \$ will be spent on salaries, admin, rent or transportation.

They sold buttons at the tills where customers could donate, then Lake Country Co-op matched the donation amount and Federated Co-operatives Limited matched the amount. [Lake Country Co-op](#)



We are grateful for Danielle Grunberg from White Fox who again held a yoga class dedicated to bringing food for the Oasis center. Thank you to all that contributed and Danielle thank you for your generosity, kindness, time, and for thinking of us. You are loved. ❤️



We want to thank Glenn of Gieni's Carrot River restaurant for the large donation of ham, cabbage rolls, salads and desserts to the Oasis. Thankyou so much for your generosity Glenn, and for thinking of us. Happy New Year!!! <https://>

We are grateful for Past Oasis President Hazel Peterson and Rod for their ongoing and generous support to the Nipawin Oasis :):):) 100% of this financial donation will go to people in need of food or an emergent need. No \$ will be spent on salaries, admin, rent or transportation. Thankyou so much Hazel and Rod your support means a lot to us!

We are thankful to Bunge and also their employees that donated to the Nipawin Oasis. This large donation will be a tremendous help for those in need. There were towels, blankets, hygiene, and food. Thank you so much for your generosity and for thinking of us it is much appreciated.

We are so thankful for the generosity and kindness of Garry and Gloria Schenstead for their donation of 2 food hampers for families in need. Thankyou so much for thinking of us and the families :):):) Garry was a past president of the Oasis and a previous Executive Director. So thankful for his ongoing support and guidance to help us create the Oasis that it is today :):):) You are loved :)

Danae Carson and Gramma we Thankyou for your donation to a young family with a baby. Your heart warms mine. when asking her how the drop off went this was Danae's reply

" I asked if they had a freezer for the apple pie and he goes actually we just bought one from home hardware we are just trying to find someone who can pick it up because they can't deliver it so we said we would go get our truck and get it" So we are thankful for her husband also who delivered the freezer. Danae we appreciate your tremendous support you have given the Oasis 😊 your time, kindness and generosity will go along way. Thank you so much.



We would like to thank the SUN local #5 for their generous donation of \$250. We appreciate all the work and dedication that you provide for people. Thankyou for thinking of us.

100% of this donation will go towards food and emergent needs. No \$ will be spent on administration, rent, salaries, or transportation. Thank you so very much.

504 Railway Ave W  
Box 3146  
Nipawin, Sk. S0E 1E0



Nipawin  
**asis**  
*Community Centre Co-operative Ltd.*

Ph: (306) 862-5551  
Fax: (306) 862-5589  
Email: nipoasis1@sasktel.net  
www.nipawinoasis.com

## **Our Mission**

*We are a community resource co-operative centre that provides cultural, prevention, educational, and intervention programming, services, support and employment opportunities to the community of Nipawin and area in Northeast Saskatchewan.*

## **Our Vision**

*Our Centre will be a place where people care, belong, and get involved. Our Vision is to be one of the leaders in building an inclusive, supportive, safe and healthy community.*

**C**aring, supportive, non-judgemental and respectful, using a

**H**olistic approach that promotes wellness and that provides

**O**pportunities and uses as its guides

**I**ntegrity which is accountability, transparency and responsible while valuing a

**C**ommunity that works together and that is

**E**ffective in meeting the needs of the community and provides

**S**ecurity within a safe, respectful, and supportive environment

*Our programming focus is on **CRAFTS** which also serves as a strong foundation for the cultural, personal and leadership development of the youth, individuals and families*

**C** Caring and Culture

**R** Relationships

**A** Action

**F** Food and Fun

**T** Teamwork and Time

**S** Safety and Security



*Providing Opportunities  
for  
Positive Choices*