

# **Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre**

## **47<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**



**Honoured to serve the Chibougamau urban  
Aboriginal community since 1969**

**June 21, 2017**

**95 rue Jaculet, Chibougamau, Québec G8P 2G1  
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## PORTRAIT OF THE CHIBOUGAMAU EENOU FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

Since late 1969, the Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre (CEFC) has been welcoming and supporting Aboriginal members who reside or transit through Chibougamau through a range of front-line services aimed at improving the wellbeing of our members. Our zone of influence covers all of Northern Quebec although a small percentage flows in from across the regions. The CEFC is an autonomous non-profit urban organization governed by local elected members. This Centre is one of nine (9) Friendship Centres in Québec affiliated with the Regroupement des Centres d'amitiés autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), as well as the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).



The town of Chibougamau has a population of seven thousand six hundred people (7600) and the vast majority are francophone. However; due to the proximity of the Cree communities, many Cree call Chibougamau home. The Chibougamau Aboriginal community is estimated at close to seven hundred and fifty (750) members, the majority of whom are Cree.

Most community members choose to relocate to town from their home communities for work, housing, education, medical obligations and so on. This has been our on-going reality from the start when the CEFC provided hosteling and frontline services for non-French-speaking community members in need of translation, support accessing government and other town services, cultural awareness and bridge-building. In the spaces between the paperwork, there has been much sharing of food and culture, laughter and friendship building. Upon this foundation is built the services and events of today for which we are well-known throughout the region.

According to the 2011 Canadian census, the urbanization trend in Québec demonstrated that 52.3% of Native people now live off-reserve in Québec. This represents more than 52 300 Native people across the province. Note that numbers for Métis and Inuit were not available. These increases of First Nations people migrating from their communities and choosing to reside in urban areas, as well as members newly recognised by the courts have increased demands on urban-based organizations, such as the Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre and other Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

Throughout the years, Chibougamau has responded to the demands of this increasing population by promoting healthy balanced lifestyles through culturally significant programs, services and activities. This Centre will continue to serve its community and build upon its current services to meet the needs of the community with the mandate set forth for the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

## **MISSION AND VISION**

### **Mission**

Our mission is to provide quality services to the Aboriginal people residing in the urban area by:

- Providing a cultural gathering place for Natives living in Chibougamau;
- Promoting a multi-cultural centre that highlights Native culture and traditions and acts as a bridge to understanding between the Native and non-Native community;
- Facilitating and supporting Native participation in urban society and socio-economic development;
- Offering a comfortable and welcoming place that meets the various needs of the Native population.

### **Vision Statement**

To fulfill its mission, the CEFC will carry out projects that will maintain, develop and promote health, culture and community values. To attain this vision the CEFC will build quality infrastructure providing a healthy, secure and functional place of respite. This will be done with respect for members, its human resources and its budgetary parameter.

## A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear members,

It seems impossible that another year has come and gone so quickly. It seems the day before yesterday that we were sharing our intentions for this year. Firm intentions to move the building project forward, intentions to strengthen our methods and alignments with strategic process and social media, consultation and modern communications technology. Intentions to enrich Chibougamau with diversified and culturally safe and pertinent services within and outside our Centre itself, like Awash Uutamet Childcare Centre. Intentions that have been met and we are ever so eager to share those results within these pages.

We live in historic times as the Peoples who make up Canada search for stable footing in conciliation and reconciliation, and can be found in significant moments like the EIBJRG support of the Centre reconstruction, like the Mayor and Friendship Centre gatherings that took place in La Tuque and Val d'Or: Strong moments with long lasting potential for growth and new relationships amongst ourselves, amongst friends yet to be met, and brothers and sisters still in the recognition. Our mission is unwavering: to improve quality of life for the Aboriginal population living in and transiting through Chibougamau. Together, it is what we do.

Last Christmas marked my tenth anniversary as director of the CEFC. The time has flown and is rich with teachings and gifts. Thank you all for your contributions to that growth.

To our Centre staff: to Agnes Moore, Alice Ann Neeposh, Damien Nine O'clock Daniel Etapp, Elijah Wapachee, Evander Voyageur, Fabienne Boulanger, Frédéric Launière, Jessica Marceau, Jonathan Bosum, Laurie Ann Coonishish, Mathias Poirier, Nancy Blacksmith, Seyhone Masty, and Trinity Neeposh – I try to tell you often how vital you are to our community. You are the curve of the circle that never ends and I am forever grateful for the privilege of working with you all.

To our Board of Directors: Cindy Morrison, Pierre Pelletier, Sarah Pashagumskum, Manon Richmond, and Norman Wapachee; thank you for the discussions and the challenges that push us past our thresholds of tolerance towards greater excellence and aspiration. In between the need to govern well and the changes that flow, we have a common ground that miyuu piimadisiwiin overreach it all. Chi meegwich for growing that vision.

And to you, dear members and partners; without you, there is no Centre. You are the key that unlocks the door each day, the heart beat and the inspiration that shines meaning on the efforts we deploy. Because of you, we have the best task possible; becoming the change we seek.

In peace and friendship,



Jo-Ann Toulouse  
Executive Director

## **A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

Kwei wachiya

Well another year has gone by and things are looking good for a new centre for us in Chibougamau. I'm not sure if everyone is aware of the extraordinary work that our Executive Director does so that our Centre is still in operation.

We had such an excellent meeting with the Presidents and Mayors concerning our vision and mandates. It was a pleasure working with the Mayor of Chibougamau, Manon Cyr.

Unfortunately my health didn't allow me to be as active as I would have liked to have been and it is with sad regret that I won't be returning to the board. I need to concentrate on my health and it is my desire to continue my education at a higher level.

I wish the new board all the best and remember, with team spirit things go a long way.

Cynthia Morrison  
Outgoing President

## 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

This report is compiled according to the key funding projects and initiatives that enabled to fulfill our mission in 2016-2017.

### Urban Aboriginal Strategy

#### Community Capacity Support

The strategic directions identified within this year's Community Capacity Support program are as follows:

##### Opportunity 1: Reinforce Cultural Identity and Self-Esteem

Much of this year's orientation was devoted to the development of the CEFC reconstruction project and the construction plans to do so.

Numerous discussions were had to clarify the community's needs within the only urban organisation dedicated to the Aboriginal population.

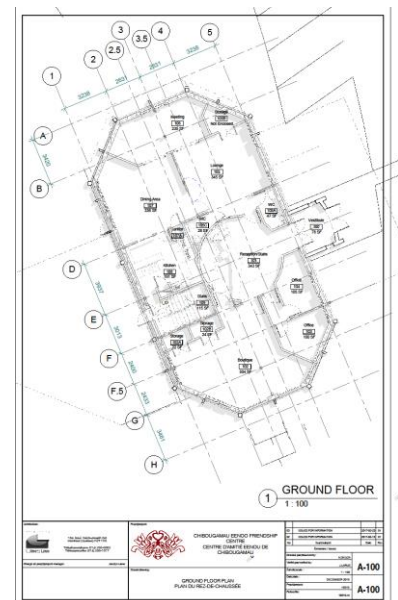


From *eenoukamikw*, the house of the people, came the orientation of traditional architecture in the shape of a *shaptuan*, our

gathering space. Oriented east, respectful of the grandfathers long anchored on our site. The flow and distribution of spaces follow the teachings of the medicine wheel as much as 90 degree angles and budget allow.

Although construction is not yet begun, collaborations with our partners in regards to cultural expression are ongoing. A part of our heritage collection is currently integrated into the Footprints: A Walk Through Generations exhibit created by Aanischaaukamikw and that will be travelling across Canada and beyond over the next two years. During construction, the rest of the collection will be preserved and cared for in their state-of-the-art vaults.

The Centre took part in the Town of Chibougamau's public consultations regarding their urban planning process. A new plan has been launched calling for greater expression of the town's relationship with neighbouring Eenouch communities and the history of this territory. These are great strides in consciously acknowledging the place and belonging of our Peoples and



reflecting this in the public spaces of the community. A first tangible element of this process is the soon-to-be-launched Intercultural Park by Gilman Lake.

### Opportunity 2: Develop Empowerment Through Participation in the Economy

Social Economy is the most coherent way we have discovered to express how our people do and go about their business on a daily basis. Issues, like opportunities, arise and concerned community members gather to address and resolve them. The models are still a little unclear and stiff but interest is increasing and the CEFC is active in the discussions to this end with both Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association who are looking to develop an inclusive cooperative for the craftswomen of the region, as well as the Cree Social Economy Regional Table where we are working on a conference that will position craft out of the realm of hobby and back into the subsistence and self-determined entrepreneurial spirit in which it once was. This conference was to take place in 2016-2017 and has been forwarded to 2017-2018.

In 2016-2017, the Centre supported the work of more than 63 craftspeople for purchases costing 19 358\$ and generating in return 27 730\$ in brut revenue for finished craft alone. Craft purchase costs vary from 6\$ to 700\$ per item. Net revenue returns into new purchases and initiatives to encourage more craftspeople to build sustainable livelihoods from their work. Time was taken with repeat vendors to share pricing strategy based on our own social economy model as well as consideration of the market and distinguishing between compassionate sales and honest value. These conversations will deepen and expand during the upcoming social economy conference and the converging initiatives coming up in the region.

### Opportunity 3: Adequate Services and Service Partnership Development

Important advances were made this year in building relationships with the Cree Health Board as well as organisations primarily devoted to the needs and preoccupations of our women. It is too early to speak of formal agreements this year but interest has been expressed to collaborate regularly. We include here the Awash Uutamet Childcare Centre because although we are the original promoter of the project, it is an organisation in its own right with whom we maintain close ties that we would like to strengthen further through an MOU in order to support the development of culturally sound and safe content and practice.

Amongst preliminary discussions with the CHB has been the pertinence to relaunch a lodging service specific to Eenuouch accessing medical services in town. An appropriate infrastructure had become available in town that would require some renovation but would well meet potential need. It has been determined however that the demand for lodging is too low to warrant a significant investment at this time.

Three workshops were offered during the year inviting the professional community to increase their understanding of cultural security as well as various aspects of Aboriginal culture in general. The medicine wheel as point of reference in holistic treatment and understanding client perspective was a significant contribution for helping intervenors better helps their clients. Further events were deferred due to lack of resources.



Referral and frontline support, access to information and community gathering opportunities like crafting and potluck, the shop, workshops, a hot lunch and coffee – continue to be our bread and butter, the first reason members step through the door each day. We estimate a similar of 11 000 visits and calls, as in 2015-2016. Our statistics tool reached the end of its useful capacity in the course of the year and refused to hold the data entered. Hand kept records show similar frequency with decreases at the annual Aboriginal day event due to rain and weekday positioning and continued disuse by youth.

#### **Opportunity 4: Social Inclusion to Eliminate Systemic Discrimination**

The CEFC was greatly involved in creating greater awareness on this point throughout the year. Unfortunately, lack of staff seriously hindered the ability to pursue the momentum built over the previous two years with various partners.

As mentioned earlier, the Town of Chibougamau presented their *Programme particulier d'urbanisme* in the course of the year which offers great visibility as well as opportunities to pursue public debate and awareness regarding systemic discrimination and racism. The programme highlights the use, ornamentation and identification of public space in a manner honouring the People of the territory thus advocating greater visibility and collaboration.

Certain files, such as the Family Policy were deferred by the Town for consultation in 2017-2018. Requests were made to join certain committees such as New Arrivals and the Recreation Committee, and are still pending. Others, however, like Gang Active, have enabled us to pursue our awareness initiatives sharing our position and facilitating integration of tolerance and awareness in partner activities.

Work with landlords is pending the arrival of a new employee to complete the consultation and draft documents.

The 2017 Intercultural Friendship Week was again committee-led this year. The more we are to spread a message of tolerance and respect, the further it will travel. We are grateful for the participation of Ouje-Bougoumou Chief Bosum, as well as the mayors of Chibougamau and Chapais, the presidents of the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Health Board, as well as participating organisations such as Via Scola and Appui Jamesie who actively spoke up to promote learning, respect and tolerance.

#### **Urban Partnerships**

##### **Aschimaatam**

The Town of Chibougamau lent its support to Aschimaatam, the aim of which was to gather together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners to further develop corridors of communication and thus fill in the gaps of service through communication. Linked to this were the development of a mobile application facilitating access to Centre services as well as a new statistical tool developed with the information needs of our partners and our needs in mind.

Delays in funding and the inability to hire required the project to be scaled down to a more manageable level. The liaison aspect of the project has been deferred to another opportunity while continuing to search for a potential candidate for the position.

We are very pleased to invite members to access our new website: [www.eenoukamikw.ca](http://www.eenoukamikw.ca), cross-linked with [cefc.ca](http://cefc.ca) and there download the Android or Apple app appropriate to one's device. The app is tied to the website as well as to our Facebook page (s) so updates are immediately available on all platforms according to clientele-type and preference. This responds to the first of two demands of the community: easy access to the Centre, and a 28-hour day. We have some ideas brewing for the second request...

The second tool we have developed renders our statistical intake information to be more diversified, precise and manageable so as to add certain criteria according to partner need. An image of the tool is appended to this document.

Finally, we were able to piggyback an activity of our work plan on the provincial survey of local access to services for which the report will be available later this year and will serve to pursue the health and social services development feasibility project continuing in 2017-2018.

Cultural sensitivity training was provided with new partners taking part, as well as the Town of Chibougamau continuing to train their staff each year. Piwaseha, a workshop developed and provided by the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue was attended by a dozen professionals. An introduction to the teachings of the medicine wheel in health and social services to develop greater cultural sensitivity with the Aboriginal clientele was well attended, 8 of 10 spaces filled, and requests have been received to have more similar activities that enable practitioners to have honest exploratory conversations and teachings in a respectful space. This sets the stage for the continuation of the communications corridor we wish to concretise so as to support our mobile population in their access to care and services.

### **Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones**

The Secrétariat has been providing *Support of the Mission funding through the Fonds d'initiatives autochtones I and II* for more than 12 years now. Objectives specific to 2016-2017 are detailed below.

### **Long Term Planning**

*Complete Strategic Plan:* the strategic plan was completed this winter and covers 2017-2022. Objectives set for the period are as follows:

- Infrastructure adequate to the accomplishment of the Centre's mission
- Community engagement: participation is doubled or tripled because services are reaching those that can benefit from them
- Community leader: entities, businesses seek collaboration with the CEFC to accomplish their mission. Credibility with these organisations is confirmed because of increased

community involvement in the evolution of the Centre, engaged Board, members involved in Chibougamau.

- Multiple partners echo the Centre mission and collaborate to make it a reality, both Cree and Jamesian recruit, inspire, engage, accomplish, innovate
- CEFC miyuu pimadisiwiin is the core of everything we do
- Empower our greatest resource: our staff.

*Renew Continuum of Services and Resources:* much of this process was on the shoulders of the Director and was set aside temporarily to address the requirements of the reconstruction project, as well as the federal projects. It has been decided to twin the organisational diagnostic with the temporary relocation as activities will be scaled back somewhat during that time. Information and statistical data have been collected in anticipation of the services review.

*Reconstruction:* if intent were all that were required, the Centre would be rebuilt already. As we speak, the plans are being completed after a winter of discussions and it is our intention to go to tender in the Spring. The current building was hard hit by winter 2017 and will require a new roof as well as outer walls in the very short-term should funding not be finalised as planned. Twinned to the drawing process has been the concerted search for new funding for urban infrastructure. The Centre is awaiting confirmations of project acceptance from the federal, provincial and regional levels at this time. Originally planned at 4.3 000 000\$ the project was split into two phases in early summer in order to provide adequate safe and healthy space for immediate needs, with some compromise. The cost of the new construction project is estimated at 1.8 000 000\$. Staff has begun scaling back supplies and Centre accumulation in view of a temporary relocation.

## COMMUNITY STRATEGY

### CPE Awash Uutamet

In December 2016, Awash Uutamet Childcare Centre held its inauguration and annual general assembly. Much gratitude went out to the many partners, staff and families who believed with us in the viability of this project that was eight years in development. A special heartfelt appreciation must be made to Charles Burgy and past and present staff of the Centre d'études collégiales à Chibougamau - Services aux collectivités. The project couldn't have moved forward without their precious collaboration.



The CPE community have all agreed that if it takes a community to raise a child, it definitely takes a community to grow a CPE! With that in mind, and a year of operations under its belt, the next two will be invested in enriching the cultural and educational aspects of the organisation with continuous training for staff and increased input from community members.

### CEFC Building Project

In Spring 2016, the funding proposal for the project was rewritten to highlight the social economy orientation of the CEFC. New calls for projects were made by the federal government under Canada 150 for which the Centre has requested the maximum amount of 500 000\$. After much negotiation and discussion, the CEFC has resubmitted its infrastructure project to the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones for a maximum grant of 600 000\$. A mortgage is currently being negotiated for a maximum amount of 500 000\$ which will be added to the 200 000\$ the Centre is investing in the project while other sources are sought to complete the financial aspect of the reconstruction project.

In addition to the Town of Chibougamau resolution supporting the new infrastructure project, the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Regional Government followed suit after hearing our presentation and acknowledging the place and pertinence of the Chibougamau Eeyou Friendship Centre in the region. We are grateful for this support and are committed to living up to their trust.

The architectural and engineering plans are taking longer than planned and are expected in early Spring so as to go to tender for construction to commence this summer.

## **Mamo Attusetau**

The Centre joined a provincial initiative to apply for funding under Health Canada in order to develop culturally significant and safe health and social services in town. The funding was granted and combined with the Ninan early childhood initiative so to as to broaden the continuum of family services in town. As of mid-Fall 2016, funding streamed down to Centres and we were in a position to hire a project manager. After five postings, the Centre is undergoing interviews with new candidates for the new fiscal year.

In the interim, a meeting was held with the Cree Health Board to discuss lodging, urban access to services and the potential for an Aboriginal proximity clinic through the Centre and in collaboration with both regional Health Boards.

## **Centre Communications**

After many years of discussion, work was completed on the Centre's website: [www.eenoukamikw.ca](http://www.eenoukamikw.ca). we are looking forward to sharing the work in progress with you. For those interested in accessing the Chiiwedini, It will become available once again in the format of a monthly newsletter available on the site or by registration, in your email!

## **Governance and Administration**

### **Governance**

Two Board meetings were held over the course of the year as well as an executive committee meeting and two extraordinary meetings. Were developed; the strategic plan as well as a financial policy.

### **Human Resources**

Current staffing has moved a bit in 2016-2017 fiscal year as some funding came to an end and other staff pursued their studies and took time away to welcome new life. Without the two employees on leave, retention rate for the year is 80%. Through projects and regular programming, the Friendship Centre maintained four (4) full-time positions and six (6) part-time jobs throughout the year. Eighty percent (80%) of staff over the year were Aboriginal.

Plans for the year included the addition of two new project manager positions that we were unable to fill despite competitive salaries and engaging mandates. For years, this has been an issue for the Centre and other businesses and organisations of the region. Today, this has become a serious handicap to our development and attainment of our long-term goals. This organisation must invest time and energy in the near future in a strategy that enables us to pursue our mission and offer sustainable, satisfying employment, with the ensuing organisations changes that entails.

## Administration

This fiscal year has been a challenging one regarding funding and finance. Exceptionally, both federal and provincial funding programs came to an end March 31, 2017. Normally the programs are staggered and do not imperil the operations of our organisation as they have this year. The federal Urban Aboriginal Strategy prolonged the program renewal process by three years and enriched the development of future programs through the consultations and collaborative initiatives that developed therein. However, calls for projects that replaced former core funding programs left us unsure of the services we could support and the activities we could accomplish. The repercussions were felt immediately with a slight decrease in participation and the melting of our meager reserves. Overall, we have been able to keep our head above water while eagerly awaiting the orientations of the new funding streams announced in the annual budgets.

## CEFC Partners and Collaborators

The work of any Aboriginal Friendship Centre takes place as much outside its walls as within. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the partnering organisations and collaborators that actively worked with us this year to provide service to the community.

### Local:

Awash Utamet CPE Board of Directors  
CAVAC  
Carrefour communautaire  
Carrefour jeunesse-emploi de la Jamésie  
Centre de femmes les Elles du Nord  
Centre d'entrepreneuriat nordique  
Centre Jeunesse du Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean  
Centre local d'emploi de Chibougamau  
Chibougamau Chamber of Commerce  
Commission scolaire de la Baie-James  
Comité local en matière de violence  
conjugale  
Gang Active

MacLean Memorial School  
Maison des jeunes le Sac ados  
Maison Oxygène-Raymond-Ross et  
Réseau Hommes Québec  
Ministère de l'Économie, innovation et  
exportations Québec  
Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité  
sociale  
Office municipal d'habitation de  
Chibougamau  
Sûreté du Québec  
Ville de Chibougamau

### Regional:

Aainschuukamikw Cree Cultural Institute  
Administration régionale de la Baie-James  
Centre régional de la santé et des services  
sociaux de la Baie-James  
Comité condition féminine de la Baie-James  
Comité de saines habitudes de vie  
Commission loisirs et sport de la Baie-  
James  
Commission scolaire de la Baie-James  
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of  
James Bay  
Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association  
Cree Nation Government

Cree Social Economy Regional Table  
Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association  
Eeyou Istchee Baie-James Regional  
Government  
Emploi-Québec regional office  
Jean Boucher, Ungava MNA, Ungava  
Ouje-Bougoumou Band Council  
Programme de travaux compensatoires  
Pôle de l'économie sociale Baie-James  
Réseau jamésien de Développement social  
Roméo Saganash, Member of Parliament of  
Abitibi-Eeyou Istchii, Baie-James –Kativik  
Tourisme Baie-James

### Provincial:

Regroupement des Centres d'amitiés autochtones du Québec and affiliated Centres  
Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones

### National:

National Association of Friendship Centres and associated Centres

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Activities and Projects

#### Chibougamau Eenou Women's Circle and Local Women's Association

The Chibougamau Eenou Women's Circle is a loosely woven group of Aboriginal women living in Chibougamau that gather around the activities and initiatives of the Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre, especially craft.



The Women's Circle exists since 2006 and was initially created after the Centre obtained a grant from Status of Women to host empowerment workshops focused on feminism and leadership. The workshops did not last long but the desire to meet around crafting projects did. Break out beading groups have become popular over the past few years although the demand for traditional sewing and crafting is being heard once again.

For the past year, the local women's association has been without a president but with the financial help of CWEIA, a few activities did take place. Two in particular stand out, the Women's Day supper and consultation / beading night - our ladies like to multi-task! And a fabric sale to raise funds for future activities.



The Centre supports this initiative through the sharing of resources: staff, administration, space, planning, coaching and more. It cannot however, replace the vibrant, passionate and elected status of

a chosen president to represent the preoccupations and interests of Chibougamau iskweuch unless the community asks for this to be so. We truly hope to see new leadership and development for the local association in the coming year.

#### Homework Assistance

The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport financially supports the existence of this program, enabling local children to benefit from additional help with their lessons and assignments free of cost.



This year, the CEFC received 12 registrations for the homework assistance program from students attending Maclean Memorial and Notre Dame du Rosaire schools. Of these students, ten (10) attended the program and seven (7) did so regularly.

The year started off splendidly; we requested and obtained funding to add an evaluation component to our program as well as enrich the content. We have been trying to hire a teacher to work with us for eight (8) years, the same hiring challenges that affect the three (3) school boards of the region also hit us hard, slowing the progress we wish to make with the reach of this program. Registration was slow, giving us time to coach a new coordinator and begin working with our new teacher and evaluation consultant. Unfortunately, in the course of the Fall as we were setting student benchmarks, our teacher had to pull out of the program to meet personal obligations.

Although progress slowed, our student tutors, Trinity and Mathias, made good progress with the students. By the end of term one, reading benchmarks were set, the program routine settled, and student preferences and goals set for each month. The Grandfather Teachings were gradually integrated into regular activities as were healthy living habits through the snacks offered and the energy breaks before and during study time. Settling down to homework immediately after class when friends haven't seen each other all day is well nigh impossible without a game of tag or dodgeball or parours to tame exuberance. Trinity is a creative girl who designed special activities to motivate and celebrate students every term and special event. Her sidekick, Mathias, handily took over exuberance management ensuring some calm and decorum throughout activities. Our students grew in confidence and ability throughout the year. Two in particular stand out: the first for confidence and reading ability- easily catching up two grade levels in ability, speed and comprehension by Easter to performing above grade level by end of year. Our second student gained immense language of instruction/third language skill and confidence in the course of the year. We are equally proud of all our kids for their growth and learning this year and are honoured by the time we have with them.

### Hot Lunch Program

Fifteen (15) students coming from different elementary schools registered for the Hot Lunch Program this year as did 26 youth. The diners were provided with hot healthy meals during lunch hour throughout the school year. Evander Voyageur, Nancy Blacksmith and Damian Nine o'clock, lunch monitors, led activities ranging from arts and crafts, board games, playing in the fresh air – dodge ball has made a come back as has sliding and king/queen of the castle in winter !

Continued involvement with the Gang Active(Québec en forme) movement in Chibougamau as well as a welcome donation from *Régime de bénéfices autochtones* will enable us to fund a nutrition train-the-trainer workshop with *Cinq Épices* to introduce healthy eating habits and cooking to students in the new year. Hopefully, this will help us counter poutine infestations in the same way as we have dropped the pop for a few years now.

### Family Gym Nights

Gym nights continued to Goose Break then began again in September to end just before next Goose Break, Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8pm. The under-ten accompaniment rule implemented last Spring worked well early in the season but petered out by December. A series of cross-communications between the gym staff and the Centre led to some cancelled activity in the winter. Despite the glitches, we are grateful to the Town of Chibougamau who sponsored half the cost of the rentals, already modestly priced, throughout the school year.

Youth 11 to 14 specifically requested gym time and shone by their absence consistently every week. Further exploration will be done to understand this phenomenon prior to implanting the activity next year.

### Community and Potluck Suppers

Potluck may be going the way of the dodo but one thing is certain: the CEFC has always been and always will be a gathering place for our people. The faces change somewhat over time with new families joining each season. We want to see each other but don't always have the time or place to cook. The Centre will be thinking how to do differently next season to address these needs as well. That said, the CEFC hosted five (5) potluck suppers and six (6) community suppers in the course of the year from April to March. Eli Wapachee devoted great energy in the Fall to make these events fun for all and this continued into winter under the gentle guidance of Laurie-Ann Coonishish, all ably supported by Centre staff. Some had themes like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Intercultural Friendship, Goose Break or the annual Aboriginal Day macouchan, Others were an opportunity to gather friends and neighbours together for an evening of catching up. Each supper brought together between five (5) and seventy (70) people each time. Our aim each time is the same, bringing our urban family together in a homey setting to strengthen relationships and break isolation, making town a friendlier place.

## Events

### Nisk Supper

We held our annual Nisk Supper on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016, celebrating the return of the geese in our territory and the hunt associated with it. We are happy to celebrate this ancestral event the best way possible, by honouring the gift the geese made to the hunters with a community feast. The hunters brought us plenty of geese this year, and 40-odd participants feasted leaving nary a bone untouched.

### Tsteyihtaakusuu Youth Gala 2016



Tsteyihtaakusuu Youth Gala 2016 took place June 9<sup>th</sup> at the Chibougamau Golf Club in the presence of our MNA delegates, Don Bubar and Elizabeth Nicholls, Cree Nation Youth Chief Alexander Moses, as well as Principal Etta Viens with some of her teaching staff from MacLean Memorial School.



This year's 24 recipients were all under the age of twelve. They were celebrated in the presence of more than 60 guests.

Tsteyihtaakusuu celebrates youth for expressing the Grandfather Teachings in their daily lives be it at school, their extra curricular activities, through traditional practice or the arts. There is no age to be a role model and so we were delighted to honour these 24 youth with a feather and certificate in recognition of their teachings to us.



### Aboriginal Day 2016

Taking advantage of the fair's absence we celebrated the 35th edition of our Chibougamau Eenu Friendship Centre Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup> for the (hopefully) last time before reconstruction, at the Friendship Centre. Aboriginal Day is a special moment to gather, celebrate our heritage and share our culture with Chibougamau's population. We were honoured as well to welcome Lincoln Nine O'clock into the community during his Walking Out Ceremony. As is our norm, more than 300 people answered the call and celebrated with us, and due to rain, approximately 268 plates were served during the macoushan.



A fun and new addition to the event was the integration of fiddle dancers from Mistissini under Demerise Coon's direction, who invited Chibougamau to dance. John and Kevin Boudrias kept

up the pace with their brand of power country and the Nemaska hiphop artists, The North Stars completely rocked the house – er, tent.

### Festival des Richesses naturelles de Chibougamau

It was a great privilege to be invited to take part again in this festival that sees the forest for so much more than just the trees. Shout out and thanks to Melissa Rodgers for leading a medicine wheel crafting workshop where teachings regarding the directions, seasons, colours, and generations were shared. A bannock-making workshop was blown away, literally – under gale-force winds, but will take place next edition. Participants, organisers and the Centre were pleased with turnout and interest in our activity.



### Festival Folifrets

Festival Folifrets Baie-James Family Day asked us to set up our teepee, we decided to get the



community in on the action! Despite the bitter cold, more than 20 teams took up the challenge of our teepee contest. Its harder than it looks and our people-sized collapsible domiciles made for excellent goofy social media posts, stories and happy faces.

### Intercultural Friendship Week 2017

The goal this year was to enable Chibougamau to recognize the place and pertinence of cultural security and the reality of First Peoples as exactly that, as opposed to amalgamation into cultural community. The need for clarity and example is clear as awareness increases regarding reconciliation, and Aboriginal history comes to light. The local community is looking for points of reference and it is at this point that the CEFC Intercultural Friendship Week displays its pertinence.

For the 13<sup>th</sup> edition, APPUI Jamésie and Via Scola joined the CEFC steering committee to plan and organize the events that took place during the week. Change over in staff meant the event didn't get the investment of time it deserved but its mission gave us the energy to engage the community all the same.



The central theme to the 13<sup>th</sup> edition was knowledge-sharing; training. It is by getting to know each other that we can replace ignorance with understanding and common ground. To this end, three workshops were offered to different groups drawn from all spheres in town.

The first two-day session was regarding the medicine wheel, led by Paul-Yves Weizineau, a respected Elder, and was offered specifically to health, community outreach and social services professionals. The goal was to create points of reference from a philosophical point of view to better grasp world view and thus begin conversations with Aboriginal clients that were more culturally respectful and holistically-based. Nine of the ten spots were filled; youth protection, social services, public security, women's advocacy and the CEFC made up this group. By the end of the workshop, members were asking for the full course and more in-depth material to further develop their practice and better support the individuals and families in their practice.

The UQAT-developed UQAT *Piwaseha* workshop was offered again this year to great acclaim. The Town of Chibougamau has committed to sending employees each year until all municipal staff have been introduced to cultural awareness and sensitivity. It began the process last year and continues to send department heads first in order to positively influence the conversations taking place in Town Hall. The workshop this year attracted a younger and more community-based group. Requests have come in to provide the training at other moments in the year.

The final workshop was an evening presentation to meet the interest of the general public regarding Aboriginal culture as expressed in the region. It was a space to ask questions freely throughout the presentation so that participants could better understand the visible expression of Cree culture and develop the words and understanding to relate to what they see. The workshop was very engaging, the questions enlightening as much as the content.

Other activities included the intercultural potluck supper that had to compete with numerous other large-scale activities in town and yet still managed to gather 20 people for an exotic buffet of new and intriguing regional specialties and some heart-felt sharing. The Centre devised its own version of the Danish social experiment Outside the Box. The questions were poignant, even the reluctant allowed their spirits to draw them in. Unfortunately, a video malfunction put paid to our desire to immortalize the event. We will consider this a practice run and do it again in the Fall. It is interesting, and heart-breaking, to see that in reality, there is so much more that we have in common besides the blood in our veins, the addresses at which we live, the clothes on our backs, the food we share. Hope, aspiration, courage, fear, hurt, determination, love; these are our common ground.

Opération Wachiya continued to be deployed as key partners took part in the radio campaign to bring awareness regarding racism and discrimination including the Towns of Chibougamau and Chapais, the Centre régional de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie-James, Via Scolaire and APPUI, the Chamber of commerce of Chibougamau and Chapais and Chief Curtis Bosum of Ouje-Bougoumou. The powerful message carried by local change makers was heard

throughout the week; it takes one word to change the world, say hello, bonjour, samba, wachiya.

The week of activities finally came to a slippery end with families gathering at the local ski hill for an afternoon of tubing and skiing. Thanks to our local MP, Romeo Saganash, ten (10) youth enjoyed the early Spring sun showing off their moves on skis and boards. Nine (9) families sent another 26 people clambering up the hill to mix and mingle, getting to know each other amidst the frolicking and triple tube dares.

### Rassemblement des maires et CAA I et II

At the suggestion of Maire Matte of Senneterre during the SAMU forums of 2014, the Friendship Centre Movement and proximity



town mayors were hosted in La Tuque in October and Val d'Or in March to learn about the scope and mission of Quebec Aboriginal Friendship Centres and urban reality for our community. During the March conference was signed the mutual



Commitment to Improve the Quality of Life of Urban Aboriginals. This collaboration is a constructive follow up to the Town of Chibougamau's membership with the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racial Discrimination as well as the ongoing friendly relations and support between our two organisations.



## Socio-Economic Development

The Socio-Economic Development Sector ensures that the CEFC contributes to its financial autonomy by creating means of sustainability, profit and longevity. A social enterprise long before the term became current in Québec, the Centre adheres to the principle that profit returns to those who generate it – the artisans, employees and community members - through programs, activities and respectful mark-up. The two key services that enable us to work towards our goal of sustainability are the Lunch Program and the Craft Shop.

### Lunch Program



The Centre continues to be a very lively place at lunch time with some forty (40) starving children and teens clamouring for food and attention. This program encourages students to feel at home in town while eating a healthy, low-cost meal in good company. MacLean Memorial high school students continued this year to join us for lunch and to hang out until afternoon classes began again each day. Poutine and delivery are making horrible inroads at lunchtime however and so this will be reviewed in the course of the summer.

Pricing for kids and youth was maintained for yet another year. Menus continue to be scrutinised to maximize appetites rather than the litter bin. The increase in fresh fruit and vegetables has led to students physically choosing these options rather than a sweet while healthy choices for dessert and snacks for youth and staff helped continue the effort to change attitudes. While still in some deficit, the social gain in providing a known and valued place for lunch for our children makes the program a success.

### Craft Shop

The Friendship Centre is renowned for its Craft Shop. Over the past years, it continues to maintain its reputation for being the best place to find Cree crafts in the lower North. Native community members, local residents and tourists make the shop a popular spot for supplies and quality traditional merchandise. The shop's many strengths lie in the diversity of quality handmade product, honest pricing, dedication to preserving and promoting Aboriginal craft and a concerted effort to celebrate the beautiful work of hobbyists to master crafters.



The Centre's custom that the major part of the sale price go to the craftsperson that created the item remains constant, honour to the maker. More than 75% of the shop's clientele is Aboriginal which suggests that we continue to hear and respond to the needs and interests of the community through the shop. The gradual increase in local non-Native sales we have been seeing continues to increase as shoppers, especially young professionals, discover the varied



wares on offer, many of whom seek gifts and personal items that reflect the peoples of the region. Resituating the shop in our future reconstruction will encourage more street traffic and visitors and hopefully impact sales as well.

For the past three years, we continue to make a modest positive gain in revenue and diversification of our offer. We have continued to innovate and source crafting supply much in demand. Online competition for similar product is fierce and customer loyalty has been challenged over the past three years. We had planned to get the shop online this year and the project has been delayed while we ensure that our website and app platforms are solid prior to adding a new resource for our more than 8000-item inventory.



## **Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre Team**

### **Board of Directors**

Cindy Morrison—President

Norman Wapachee – Vice-President

Sarah Pashagumskum – Director

### **Administration**

Jo-Ann Toulouse – Executive Director

Agnes Moore – Accounting Clerk

Alice Ann Shecapio Neeposh/ Jonathan Bosum – Reception/Shop

### **Community Services**

Jessica Marceau, Elijah Wapachee & Laurie-Ann Coonishish– Community Coordinator

Nancy Blacksmith– Lunch Animator

Fabienne Boulanger – Cook

Trinity Neeposh & Mathias Poirier – Homework Monitors

Sehyone Masty – Youth Monitor

Daniel Etapp, Damien Nine O’Clock & Evander Voyageur - Janitor