



Fort Severn First Nation

With the support of IYFP Project Coordinator Allan Turtle, a partnership was initiated with Chief Paul Burke in 2018. Since then, Kim Matheson (Carleton) has made numerous trips to Fort Severn, and has been working primarily with the Chief and representatives from the education sector. Youth Apprentices were engaged in the community for the spring of 2019, providing them with training and support to document community assets.

In the summer of 2019, the community and IYFP partnered with [Journalists for Human Rights](#) to conduct a 6-week summer multimedia training program for high school students who were back in the community for the summer. The training program was aimed at developing students' interviewing, journalism and video/photography skills. Calling themselves the [Mushkego Lowland Advocates](#), the youth worked together to identify their topics, conduct interviews, construct their narratives and produce radio and video stories about their community. They produced seven video clips ranging from 8 minutes to 38 seconds that explore different facets of their lives, including an interview with MPP Sol Mamakwa! The videos were uploaded to YouTube and can be seen here - [Mushkego Lowland Advocates Videos](#). Some of the youth also worked to produce [two longer radio segments](#) that were played on the local radio station. Youth stories were also shared at a community potluck held in mid-August, before the youth had to leave to return to high school.

On November 25, 2019, it was announced that the **Mushkego Lowland Advocates won the JHR award for Outstanding Work by an Indigenous Youth Reporter**, for their work on the radio and video piece, called *Access to mental health services with Cst. Alex Lewis*. In this piece, co-hosts Alyssa McKinney & Laney Miles use interviews with band health-program managers and community members, as well as NAPS officer Alex Lewis, to examine the implications of the limited access to mental health services in their community. You can access the award announcement here – [Way to go Mushkego Lowland Advocates!](#)

Currently, the IYFP research team is working with community members to explore opportunities to enhance land-and science-based opportunities for youth in the community.

Sioux Lookout

In partnership with SLFNHA we have recently hired a new Youth Resiliency Program Coordinator who will begin in January 2020. Graduate student Ariel Root, also employed by SLFNHA, is continuing her research exploring the ways in which youth are being included in program and policy development aimed at addressing their needs.



Thunder Bay

Partners at the *Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario (MANWO)*, *Regional Youth Leadership Council*, are continuing to work closely with youth attending high school in Thunder Bay. They are currently engaged in initiatives to expand peer support and establish positive role models for students transitioning to high school or planning to attend post-secondary institutions.



Kasabonika Lake First Nation



This partnership was initiated in 2017 by then Health Director, Terry Stoney, in response to a general call for interest by IYFP that was distributed through SLFNHA. Over the past year, Robert Shepherd (Carleton), Treena Orchard (Western), and Susan Joao (Carleton, PhD Candidate) have travelled to the community several times to work with community leaders, community members and various program staff, including Brighter Futures and Choose Life, to engage and provide research skills training to youth. The idea is to give voice to youth in the community by carrying

out community asset mapping exercises, running discussions online through Facebook, and initiating small community engagement projects.

Four Youth Apprentices joined the team in Kasabonika to develop and carry out the asset mapping exercises with their peers using online and in-person techniques. These methods create a picture of the strengths youth see in their community, and the aspirations they have about learning and working there in the future. A small group of selected adult mentors in the community is supporting the youth apprentices in this effort. The apprentices are currently trying to establish a community library at the school, with the support of the Choose Life Program. Through engagement of youth, there are hopes that these activities will translate into greater participation in community activities and affairs.



Bearskin Lake First Nation

Partnership with Bearskin Lake was established in 2017 through outreach to the Education Director at the time. The work of the partnership has been guided by Band Council members, in collaboration with the Directors of Education and Health and Choose Life program staff. Over the past two years, Katherine Graham (Carleton) and Chris Mushquash (Lakehead) have held planning meetings and travelled to community a number of times. In 2017, the team collaborated with community members to deliver a soccer day for youth. This event was well received, and evolved into a greater focus on identifying opportunities to enhance and promote physical health and wellness, including healthy eating and food security within the community.

In response to these community priorities, Mark Bruner (Nipissing) and his graduate student Kieran Peltier were recruited to join the Partnership. You can learn more about Mark's work on [youth empowerment through sport here](#).

This past summer 2019, Katherine, Mark and Kieran travelled to community where Kieran delivered a training session on the proper use of new gym equipment received through Choose Life program. The team has also been supporting the development of safety and maintenance policies for recreation equipment and facilities, and collaborating with members of the SLFNHA Community Health Team to broaden community engagement in discussions of their health and wellness needs.

Over the past month, Bearskin Lake community members have been busy keeping themselves and their community safe amidst severe flooding caused by an ice jam in the Severn River. More than half of the community was evacuated to Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay. Those remaining worked tirelessly to rebuild flooded roads, keep other community infrastructure safe, check on houses and make sure pets were fed and cared for. The most recent news is that the river levels have stabilized and members of the community have returned home. Our hearts and prayers are with the people of Bearskin Lake and their relations during this difficult time.

Other IYFP Activities

IYFP Mid-Term Reflection

Throughout the summer of 2019, Project Coordinator, Andrée Germain, in partnership with PhD student Mackenzie Doiron, conducted a series of phone and in-person interviews to reflect on the work of the Partnership so far.

Interviews were conducted with 22 people involved in the project in different capacities. Strengths of the Partnership were identified, including the ability to take the time needed for relationship building with communities, as well as its ability to adapt the activities to meet community priorities.

We are currently seeking to address some of the concerns raised. For example through the development of this newsletter we hope to begin to improve communication about the activities of the Partnership with a broader audience.

Key findings from these interviews will be used to guide a discussion among research team members in January 2020, regarding how we can learn from what has been done to date to better support community priorities.

Program Committee

On October 6th, 2019, a Program Committee meeting was held via teleconference to gather feedback and perspectives from members on a draft of the Midterm Partnership Grant Report. This report provided an opportunity for reflection on the work of the Partnership so far, and plans for realising its objectives for the remainder of the SSHRC grant timeline.

Steering Committee

On October 17, 2019, a Steering Committee meeting was held via teleconference to gather feedback and perspectives from members on a draft of the Midterm Partnership Grant Report.

Mid-term Partnership Grant Report

In late October 2019, the mid-term report was submitted to SSHRC detailing activities of the Partnership to date and making the case for a continuation of funding through to the end of the seven-year IYFP grant. This report will be peer reviewed, and feedback will be sent by SSHRC by the end of January, 2020.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

January 30-31, 2020 In-person meeting in Ottawa

This meeting will bring together members from the research teams working with First Nations community partners in Kasabonika Lake, Bearskin Lake and Fort Severn, as well as partners from Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout. The purpose is to share current activities, explore what we've learned, and discuss how we might strengthen efforts to achieve the IYFP goals moving forward.

Staffing

The IYFP is currently seeking to hire a qualified individual for the position of:

Postdoctoral fellow in First Nations Resilience and Wellness

For more information about employment opportunities with the Partnership please [follow this link to our website](#).

For more information please contact Kim Matheson (PI)

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