



Boozhoo gakina awiya!

Gagwe-gikendamaawiziwin 2025



Students from local Anishinaabemowin classes competed the annual Gagwe-gikendamaawiziwin language competition at our Rainy Lake campus Friday, April 25th. This event celebrates Anishinaabemowin, showcases how area schools support the language, and enables students to display their language skills in a supportive way. Despite the power outage students, staff, knowledge keepers, and elders had a fun filled day.

Winners

Senior Division:

Champions - St. Mary School

2nd Place - FFHS

3rd Place - Crossroads School RRDSB

Junior Division:

Champions - Robert Moore Public School

2nd Place - St. Mary School

3rd Place - J.W. Walker School



Dog Sledding & Biboon Event



This winter, Waking Up Ojibwe Anishinaabemodaa hosted two incredible land-based and cultural events that brought together over 175 participants. On January 29th, more than 75 families joined us at the Nordic ski trails for a bush-style dogsledding experience, enjoying 1.2 km rides through the snow-covered trails. Families also warmed up in the chalet with cedar tea, language games, a fire, and traditional activities like popping wild rice and snowshoeing.

Then on February 22nd, we welcomed nearly 100 attendees for a full-day Biboon gathering that featured dogsledding, ski waxing, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing, along with yummy foods like wild rice soup, bannock, and frybread. Indoor language-based games, beaver and rabbit skinning demonstrations, and teachings with elders Don Jones and Dwayne Johnson—plus legends shared by Jason Jones—rounded out the day. Miigwech to our community partners United Native Friendship Centre, Gizhewaadiziwin Health Access Centre, Weechitiwin, and the Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag class for supporting and volunteering at these beautiful winter events!



Waking Up Ojibwe
Anishinaabemodaa

What's New?

The Winter-Spring 2025 **Azhemiinigoziwin** cohort participated in weekly language classes with Waabishkiginew-Shaelyn Jordan that were aimed at providing a foundational introduction to Anishinaabemowin. The curriculum emphasized practical conversational use of the language, and was encouraging of consistent participation and peer support.

Waking Up Ojibwe celebrated **National Indigenous Languages Day** with a week of events at the Rainy Lake Campus in late March. The week included an Anishinaabemowin Star Wars viewing, Bingo and other games, tobacco pouch making, medicine teachings, and more.

On April 15th, 2025 the IT Dept and Training Dept at SGEI began a ten week language learning program with Niigaanigaabawiik. This learning opportunity was created in response to many local organizations requesting virtual Professional Development for their staff during the pandemic. In these 10 sessions we aim to introduce learners to basic conversational Anishinaabemowin while also familiarizing them with the usage of nouns, verbs, and grammar patterns.

Rainy River Festival of the Performing Arts



The 2025 Rainy River District Festival of the Performing Arts took place on Tuesday, April 15th at St. Mary's School and was adjudicated by Robert Horton. The event was well-attended by many families and elders. Almost 70 students from JW Walker and St. Mary's Schools, Grades One through Eight, participated in a program that featured two group song performances, three poetry recitations, and one hand drum song.

Gaa-gikinoo'amaawaad Oshki-aya'aa Aki-dazhiikewininan

Back by popular demand. Boozhoo! Ellie nindizhinikaaz zhaaganaashiimon miinawaa gaawiin mashi ingikenimaasii niwiinzowin. Fort Frances indaa, Maang nindoondem. My name is Ellie and I do not have a spirit name yet. I live in Fort Frances and belong to the Loon Clan. I am excited to be a part of the Waking Up Ojibwe Team as the Gaa-gikinoo'amaawaad Oshki-aya'aa Aki-dazhiikewininan. I graduated in May 2025 from Lakehead University with a Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation and a Bachelor of Education. I was an intern for WUO for the past two summers and I am excited to expand my knowledge, participate in gatherings and ceremonies, and host traditional skill and knowledge programs in my new position. I look forward to continuing working with this great team, the language, culture, and communities!



Waking Up Ojibwe
Anishinaabemodaa

What's New?

The next **Gigidiziiminaanig** meeting will take place on May 29, 2025. This will be the first time a Gigidiziiminaanig meeting will be held in one of the 10 communities. It will be hosted at the roundhouse in Manidoo Bawitigong, Rainy River First Nations, at Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung. This meeting has been planned under the direction of the Gigidiziiminaanig to have a Spring and Fall meeting in one of the communities' each year going forward.

Our colleagues at **MIIN** have been awarded a prestigious Bush Foundation grant of \$8,200,000 to continue their important language revitalization work and continued support of language programs like ours. Our team is continually invited to their immersion and PD sessions.

Our four (4) week online immersion program **Daga Anishinaabemodaa** began on January 20th with 8 participants, 5 of whom are employees of SGEI. This program covers basic introductory conversational Anishinaabemowin with the help of Pebaamibines and his book "Daga Anishinaabemodaa". Learners are required to commit 1 hour every day to the online class and at least 1 hour of continued learning & practice on personal time.

Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag



Going forward, the name of the Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Program at Seven Generations Education Institute has been changed to:

Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag

This name has been guided and influenced by the late Richard Morrison, the words of the late Willie Wilson, and the writing of Dr. Giniwgiizhig decades ago. On the surface, this can be understood as Anishinaabe Language Warriors. A feast for the renaming occurred on January 31, 2025.

Other Highlights:

- On February 7-9, nine Anishinaabemodaa staff and fifteen Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag students attended the Ojibwe Language Symposium in Fond du Lac, MN. Robert Horton and Jeremy Andy presented Anishinaabemowini-ogichitaag: Blending Philosophies and Methods to Build Speakers.
- Ice fishing was a definite highlight this winter!
- We held star and constellation teachings, including Anishinaabemowin terms and stories.
- The class helped facilitate Gagwe-gikendamawizin, supporting learners through interactive, language activities.
- Explored understandings of rock paintings.
- Couchiching First Nation invited our students to bring their puppets to visit on April 7th!
- The class concluded for the year on May 16, 2025, celebrating a season full of language, culture, and connection with a luncheon.

Niigaanendadaa

The Mentor Learner program has been renamed **Niigaanendadaa** (Let's Think Ahead), a name gifted by Rose Marie Tuesday. The program has undergone evaluation and improvements with input from instructors, past participants, and their families. A new virtual classroom has been launched on BrightSpace, and while applications for this cohort are now closed, recruitment of fluent Anishinaabemowin speakers to support learners and future programming is ongoing.

Four students are currently in Phase 1 of the program which began with a ceremony and orientation on February 3, 2025, led by Lorna Cochrane. They are working with instructor Brittnee Hunter and fluent speaker Pamela Johnson for 15 hours a week, and have already completed three units. Students also have regular in person activities throughout the school year and will be engaging in land-based learning during the summer months.

Phase 2 of the program is currently in development. A working group of fluent speakers and team members meet monthly to create resources, brainstorm ideas, and build relationships between learners and future mentors. Experienced speakers and learners have also been invited to share best practices to support this planning.

