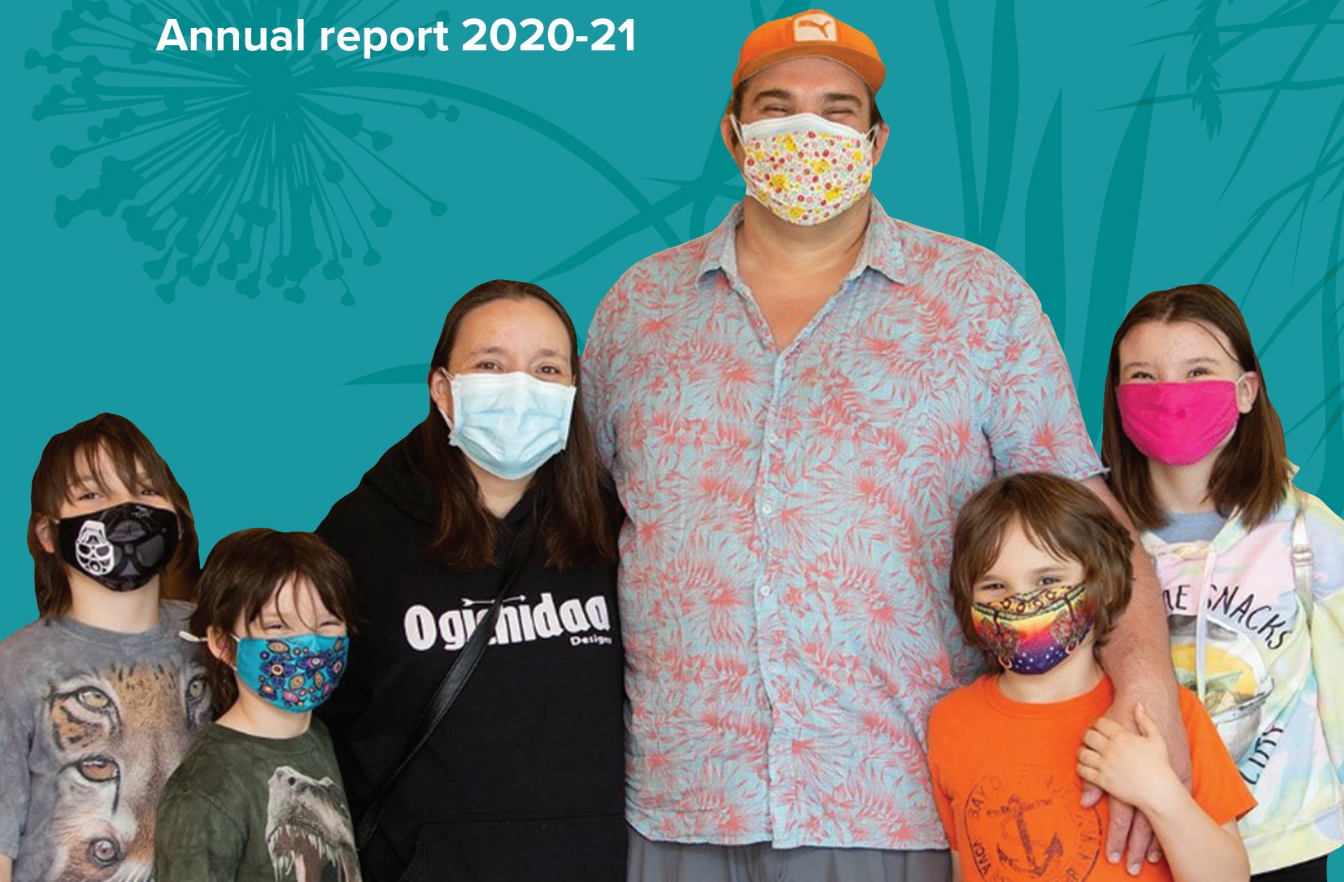




The Way We Visit:

A culturally-based pandemic response

Annual report 2020-21



Chi Miigwetch!

Thank you to our Funders and Partners

Wabano exists from the support of our funders and meaningful partnerships. We say chi miigwetch (Ojibwe work for our highest appreciation) to each one of these partners for helping the Indigenous community in Ottawa live Mino Bimaadiziwen (Ojibwe word for health, literal translation “the good life”).

- City of Ottawa
- Community Foundation of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care of Ontario
- Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport of Ontario
- Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services
- Ottawa Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa Community Foundation
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- Ontario Health
- Ottawa Public Health
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Service Canada
- United Way



The Way We Visit

Message from the Executive Director



The COVID-19 pandemic brought us challenges that we never dreamed we would have to face in our lifetime. It required us to distance from one another in a time when we yearned for authentic connection. Connection with others, with community and with activities that are meaningful to us.

The beauty of this time in our collective history is that we get to experience what our Elders have always told us: our culture is fluid. We survived as people by changing with the seasons and the generations, while staying connected to our roots.

As a health centre, we asked ourselves: how can we be fluid? How can we create connections while keeping each other safe?

Traditionally, our communities maintained connections through visiting. The pandemic allowed Wabano to be fluid, to re-imagine the way we visit.

Together, the Wabano team created a culturally-based pandemic response using four ways to practice visiting:

Visit US

Visit YOU

Visit VIRTUAL

Visit THE LAND

We then used this lens to prioritize our “visiting” activities to the most vulnerable in our community. (You can learn more about this on page 4.)

The result? Only one Indigenous senior supported by Wabano contracted COVID-19 throughout the duration of the pandemic and NO Indigenous senior died from COVID-19.

Our traditional ways of thinking, doing and being, are as valid today as they have ever been. I am deeply grateful to the Wabano Board and staff team for their efforts in upholding these traditional ways this past year. I am also grateful for the commitment of our donors, funders and community partners throughout the years.

Our Elders often remind us that building healthy communities is about “showing up”. Through the fatigue, fear, and turmoil of this pandemic, the Wabano board, staff, donors and partners continually “showed up”. For this, I say chi miigwetch.

As we move through this next year, may the way we visit continue to remind us of our interdependence to one other, the wisdom of our traditional ways and our connection to our Mother, the Earth.

Allison Fisher

The Way We Visit:

Wabano's Culturally-Based Response to the Pandemic

We merged traditional ways of connecting with the new pandemic reality to create our
"How We Visit" framework



We merged changing provincial health regulations with feedback we received from 3 community surveys to create the culturally-based pandemic response to best meet the needs of the Indigenous community in Ottawa

Vaccination Clinics, Medical appts and Mental Health Support

As an essential service, Wabano's doors remained open to provide critical in-person healthcare

Home Deliveries and Outreach

To support the most vulnerable in our community, Wabano went to clients' homes to (1) help people stay home and stay safe and (2) minimize impacts of isolation

Phone appts & Wellness checks, Virtual Programs & Events

Wabano created a variety of zoom programming and also reached out to clients via phone for wellness checks.

On-the-Land Activities

Mother Earth is always there for us, and when it was safe to do so, we offered outdoor activities for people to connect to the land.

And then we focussed our attention on the most vulnerable in our community:



*Our Old People is a traditional term of respect that honours the role that seniors play in our communities. It acknowledges the wisdom and expertise that seniors carry through their life's journey. Not all seniors are Elders (someone who has studied ceremony and different traditional protocols) but all seniors are Old People. We are reclaiming this traditional way of being, how we used to say, "I didn't know what to do, so I went to the Old People for guidance."

The results?

Keep reading to see the impact Wabano had this past year.

Visiting in Practice: Caring for our community's most vulnerable

While the pandemic took its toll on all of us, it was particularly hard on people in our communities. Here's how Wabano turned our attention to three vulnerable groups.

SENIORS

Did you
know?

Wabano delivered 1,190 food boxes and 5,757 meals to Indigenous seniors. And we completed 9,762 wellness checks, making sure our seniors could stay healthy and safe in their homes, while still being connected.

Before the pandemic, our Old People (see page 4 for definition) came together several times a week at Wabano, for fitness classes, art activities, cultural teachings, and community gatherings. Almost overnight, this social interaction ended and our older community members became isolated in their homes. With no internet, no computers and sometimes no phone, our Old people had no way to connect to others.

Wabano's staff team jumped into high gear, focussing first on ensuring our Old People had groceries and food to eat in their homes. We quickly moved to wellness checks, often done on their front lawns socially distanced. We ensured that any health concerns they had were dealt with immediately.

"I can't imagine how I would deal with the anxiety and stress without your support. There doesn't seem to be an end to all the personal family and friends losses. Living alone being a senior, sometimes its very difficult times to cope."

Did you
know?

HOMELESS

Through the pandemic, clients-in-crisis seeking Wabano's assistance increased by 300%. And we served every one of them.

Wabano has always provided outreach, providing food, clothes and a compassionate ear to Indigenous people living on the streets of Ottawa. Through the pandemic, clients-in-crisis seeking Wabano's assistance increased by 300%. Clients in poverty facing:

- Even more financial hardship
- Homelessness
- Risk of eviction
- Isolation and abusive situations
- Impacts of the closing of agencies that would normally provide them with support

Wabano's Housing Team provided each person with services and/or resources that lessened the struggles they were coping with.



How We Visit... washrooms?

During lockdown, all public washrooms were closed down. What were people living on the streets supposed to do?

Given that drop-in centres, and other buildings normally used by homeless people were now inaccessible to them, it was critical for their health and safety that other facilities be available. Wabano led an advocacy campaign in Ottawa to have porta-potties set up around the City for Indigenous people living on the streets.

These porta-potties were installed for the duration of the pandemic in areas most populated by people living on the streets.



Did you know?

FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY

During the pandemic, 11 babies were born to moms who attend Early Years programming with their older children.

Moms were worried about having to be alone in the hospital during delivery. They also worried about being able to afford the multitude of items that new babies need. They were overwhelmed and out of ideas and energy for ways to occupy their children who were now home all the time.

The Early Years team were there every step of the way, re-imagining “the way we visit” to support young moms living in poverty. Many visits with moms took place on porches, on the front lawns, or at parks. At each of these visits, we ensured that families had:

- Activity kits for the children
- Supplies they needed to welcome their newest addition. Baby bundles were lovingly put together by EY staff to welcome the babies into the community of Wabano.

When drop-in visits were not possible during the second and third wave of the pandemic, moms participated in virtual groups 4 days a week. Packages were delivered to moms with all the supplies required to participate in the groups as well as breakfast kits for the children that were supplied by the Ottawa School Breakfast Program.

And we worked together with Wabano’s medical clinic to ensure that mom’s got the prenatal care they needed:



76 pre-natal clinic clients



234 prenatal appointments



200 well-child appointments

Visit Us

Wabano's in-person services that remained open throughout the pandemic were:

1. Indigenous Vaccination clinics
2. COVID-19 testing
3. Wabano's medical clinic

Other in-person programs that were offered at reduced capacity as restrictions permitted:

1. Mental Wellness
2. Early Years Programs for families
3. Housing Department

Wabano navigated the changing landscape of the pandemic and to ever-changing COVID-19 provincial protocols.

Wabano was accredited by the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA) in 2021. The organization moved forward with the accreditation process throughout the most challenging times of the pandemic which was truly remarkable. The CCA stated that, Wabano's accreditation performance provided proof that illustrated that the organization is strongly oriented to quality improvement and innovation.



Visit Us

Indigenous Vaccination Clinics

Vaccination clinics aren't unique in and of themselves these days, but Indigenous vaccination clinics are.

What made the Indigenous vaccination clinics so special?

- A smudging ceremony was held at the opening of each new clinic.
- Indigenous artwork adorned the walls – at the St. Laurent Complex clinic, a large-scale original drawings by Ojibwe artist, Mark Seabrook, was front and centre.
- Colourful Wabano banners also served as a beautiful backdrop for the clinics, and a booth was set up for staff to answer questions and provide information on Wabano's services.
- Clients were offered snacks, water and juice.
- And a photo booth was set up to capture the special moment of "I got vaccinated"!

In partnership with Ottawa Public Health (OPH), Wabano ran clinics onsite at Wabano and at three off-site locations: St-Laurent Complex, Rideau High School and Tungasuvvingat Inuit and administered over 24,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses in a culturally-safe manner.

Did you know?

As a result of these efforts, not one of our senior clients lost their life due to COVID.

The last Indigenous clinic closed on July 29, 2021.

Wabano is tremendously proud to have partnered with OPH on this historic endeavour.





COVID-19 testing at Wabano

28

testing clinics

909

Indigenous people tested

Indigenous Vaccination Clinics

In partnership with OPH

24,152

COVID-19 vaccine doses administered

123

clinic days offsite at 3 locations:

St. Laurent, Rideau and Tungasuvvingat Inuit

14

clinic days onsite at Wabano

NEW COVID-19 Isolation House

As part of Wabano's emergency pandemic response plan, the Centre received funding for a COVID-19 isolation centre for Indigenous peoples in Ottawa. An isolation space was needed for community members who didn't have access to an appropriate space to self-isolate. The space provides the opportunity for much-needed rest and recovery time and helps alleviate the fear and anxiety of transmitting the virus to others. The new space provides a culturally safe, comfortable and home-like setting.

Did you know?

Wabano did 26,000 wellness checks throughout the pandemic, assuring our clients stayed healthy and safe.



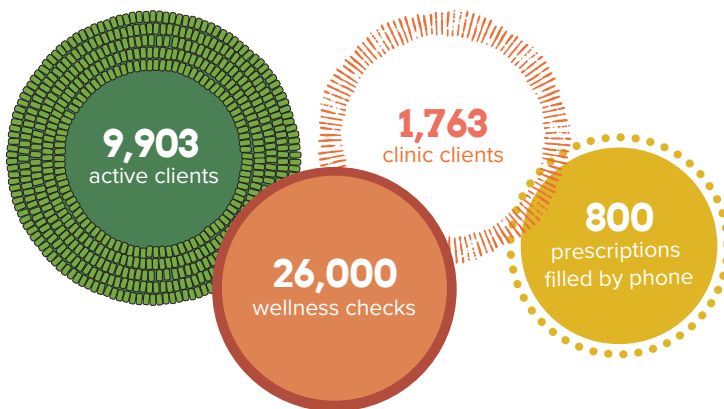


Wabano Medical Clinic

During the pandemic, the clinic remained open to in-person appointments and innovative measures were implemented to improve services such as proactive wellness checks and the refilling of prescriptions to ensure that patients did not run out of medication.

Our dedicated medical team includes physicians, nurses, medical receptionists, dietician, foot care nurse, a pediatrician, a respiratory therapist and a chiropractor.

Clients:



Specialist Clinic Clients:



706 Diabetic clients
219 Chiropractor appointments

124 Dental clinic appointments
86 New clients of the smoking cessation program
155 People accessed nicotine replacement therapy

New Moms, Babies and Children

During lockdowns, families living in poverty often experience higher levels of stress that can lead to poor health outcomes for mom and the children. So, Wabano's Prenatal Clinic offered a full range of services to help women through their pregnancies and caring for their newborns. The clinic provided well-baby care with Dr. Steve Ballou, who specializes in maternal and newborn health.

The Centre also offered a Well-Child Clinic for children 4 months-4 years old. Our pediatrician offers developmental assessments including evaluation for possible autism. A registered nurse provides support and advice to parents on issues such as breastfeeding, caring for your baby and introducing your baby to solid foods.

Our team supported:



76 pre-natal clinic clients



234 prenatal appointments



11 newborns



200 well-child appointments



Mental wellness

2,560 clients received mental wellness support

- 2,005 adults
- 555 children and youth
- 857 of these received counselling and/or treatment
- 708 of these were in crisis
- 540 clients accessed addictions' services

Early Years Program

When reflecting on generosity and the impact that it has on an individual, a child, a family, or a community, nothing shows the results more truthfully and clearly than the smile on a young child's face. With the growth of our little ones, parents often express their shock and surprise about how quickly the time has passed, and how much their child has changed in such a short period of time.

Similar feelings come to mind when reflecting on the growth of Wabano's Early Years programming. It seems like not that long ago this program lived only as a vision in our hearts - a vision of a generation of strong and self-confident Indigenous children who are connected to their culture, families, and their community.

The Wabano Early Years program has boldly moved from vision into action. Using an innovative approach that places culture and connection at the center of all programming, Wabano has been able to make real strides towards addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing Indigenous children and families. Programming and services continued during the pandemic and was a source of connection and community for caregivers and their little ones during a stressful and uncertain time.





Visit You

Seniors Outreach

Homeless Outreach

Children & Youth Deliveries





Visit You

Wabano has always had a focus on reaching our clients where they are at – whether providing support on the streets for the homeless, or cultural activities at youth group homes, or home visits to isolated seniors. With the changing provincial health regulations, Wabano changed how we provided outreach and are proud that we were able to still visit with our most vulnerable clients.

1,220
socially-distanced
home visits

313
seniors were
supported

Seniors Outreach

At Wabano, clients are the heart of our centre. When the pandemic hit, it was quickly decided that if our people couldn't come to us, we would go to them. This started with deliveries of hot lunches and food boxes but turned into so much more. We surveyed community members to find out what their other needs were, and this gave our staff a clearer picture of what was needed, and plans were actioned and modified accordingly.

Over time, our Old People started inviting our staff for socially distanced cups of tea in their backyards. It gave them a moment to reach out for help when they needed it. As the weeks passed and we continued to deliver meals to our seniors, our relationships with our clients grew even stronger.

Our seniors team continues to serve our Old People while we patiently wait for them to return in person to Wabano.

Housing Outreach

Did you know?

Over one-third of homeless people in Ottawa are Indigenous. In the past year, Wabano served 1,553 of them as well as those at risk of homelessness.

- 740 referrals to services to create network of support around the client
- 1,189 received one-on-one housing support
 - 119 successfully housed (based on available units)
 - 111 rent subsidies distributed (based on availability)
 - 637 received financial

Both homeless and “houseless” have negative connotations. At Wabano, we see our role more as pathfinders. Whether clients need help finding or keeping their home, our team is here to help clients create a safe, cozy place that they can feel pride in calling home. We offer specialized housing and support services for youth, adults and families who are living on the streets, in shelters, couch-surfing or needing to be re-housed.

“As a proud mother, I never felt comfortable admitting I needed help. It took everything I had to come and do an intake... you made me feel at home, and safe to share my story. How amazing it felt to be helped and feel for once that someone cares. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

From a single mother of three, who sought support from Wabano’s Housing Team when she lost her job during the pandemic





Children and Youth

- 480 breakfast kits delivered to families with young children
- 60 youth kitchen participation kits delivered

Back-to-School Backpacks

Wabano was unable to host our annual Donor Backpack Party due to pandemic restrictions and the lockdown. Instead, thanks to our generous donors we distributed 236 backpacks filled with school supplies to community members.

Christmas Gifts and Hampers

This year, due to pandemic restrictions, we were unable to host our usual donor Christmas party. Instead, Wabano staff delivered Christmas gifts and hampers -- complete with turkey and all the trimmings -- to 59 families with 153 children and 22 youth. In the holiday spirit, a team of staff donned Santa hats and reindeer antlers as they delivered gift bags and hampers to community members. It was a joyful experience for everyone involved!



New Mobile COVID-19 testing

Wabano received funding to purchase a new mobile medical van to use for COVID-19 testing in the community. The van was retrofitted and received by Wabano in January. The van provided COVID-19 testing in the community as well as diabetes screening at our vaccination clinics.



Visit The Land

Summer Day Camp

Spotlight: Mental Wellness for Youth



Visit The Land

No matter what is happening around us, Mother Earth is always there for us. Our Elders remind us that she provides everything that we need to survive, and thrive, throughout our lives. Throughout the pandemic, Wabano sought innovative ways for us to visit with and on our Mother, the Earth.

Summer Day Camp

In accordance with provincial pandemic guidelines, Wabano was able to offer summer camps in July and August for youth in a safe and welcoming cultural environment. The first camp took place in July for two weeks. The camp activities included traditional teachings on medicines, traditional foods, cultural practices as well as practical skills on how to make medicines and drums.

With proper safety measures in place, everyone who attended and supported the camp had a fun and safe experience, and all participants left feeling a sense of connectedness with their community and culture. This was much needed for the youth after months of isolation due to the pandemic.



Spotlight on Youth Mental Health: Culture is Care Program

Consider

During the pandemic, youth living in group homes were limited in the programming outside of the home. Already isolated from their families, creating a network of caring was critical.

Wabano's cultural solution: The Culture is Care team provided outdoor, socially distant circles. Each circle was opened with a smudge and prayer and the youth would take turns opening the circles. The circles allow for the youth to be connected to their cultural teachings, learn more about ceremonies and have a sense of belonging.

The Culture is Care program supports at-risk Indigenous youth:

- From Northern communities who are brought to Ottawa for care (healthcare, child welfare, mental wellness, etc.).
- In the city including those involved with child welfare, who may be street-involved or homeless.

Wabano's fully integrated wellness team (traditional knowledge keepers, clinicians and outreach workers) ensure each youth has holistic supports and a sense of belonging while they live away from their families and communities.

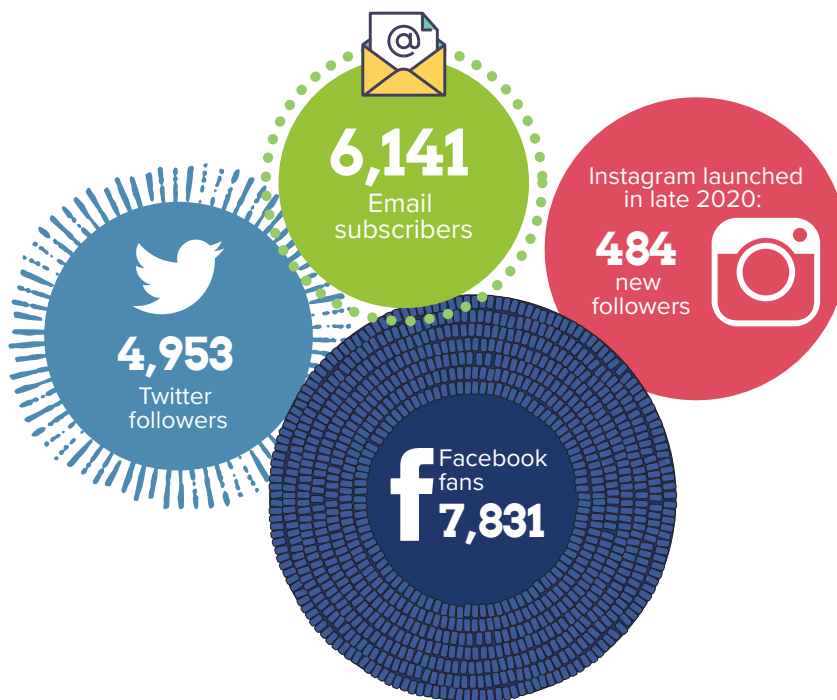


Visit Virtual

For families, children and youth
For the whole community



Wabano's virtual reach



Visit Virtual

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wabano staff quickly pivoted to ensure that clients continued to receive programming and services in a safe manner. This meant shifting in-person to virtual or moving outdoors whenever possible. Programs such as Wellbriety transitioned right way from in-person to

virtual so that our clients wouldn't miss a weekly meeting. During this time, digital inequities became apparent, and Wabano responded by supporting participation in virtual events by distributing cell phones and tablets.

Virtual Support for children, youth and their families

Wabano offered 377 virtual events and programs including:

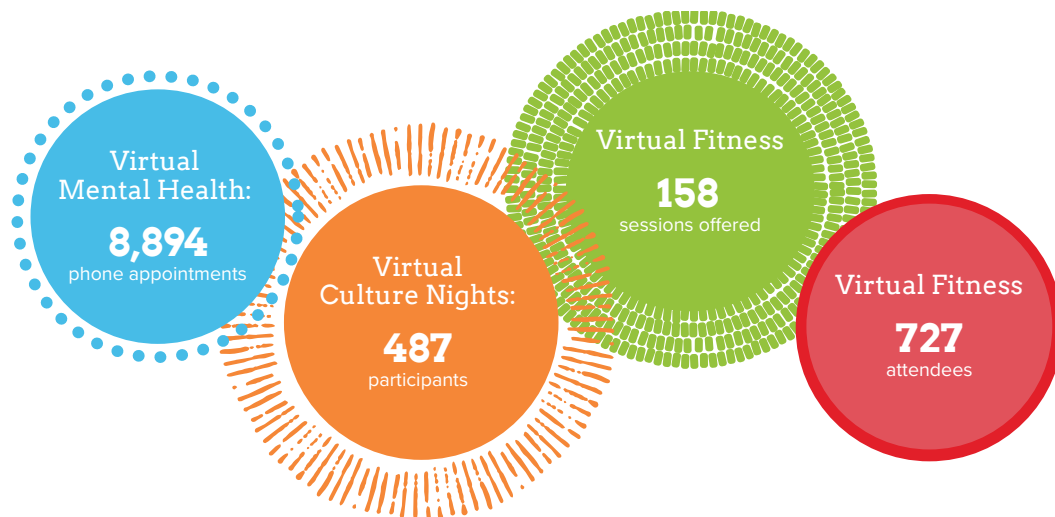
- homework support
- culture-based activities
- pre-natal support
- special guests: Notorious Cree and OhKairyn!
- These had 658 virtual visits!
- Each week, 45 participation kits were delivered to families to make their virtual experience interactive
- Each week, 50 at-home learning craft kits delivered to families' homes to help with those stay-at-home blahs.
- 63 virtual presentations to classes from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board and the Ottawa Catholic School Board

March Break Virtual Camp

Over three weekends, 46 youth joined an innovative virtual camp. Over 20 artists and cultural knowledge keepers presented at the camp, teachings were provided and children participated in crafts, storytelling and cooking activities.



Virtual Offerings for the whole community



Indigenous Anti-Racism Training

Providing Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) training for healthcare providers has been a priority for Wabano for many years due to the high levels of racism that Indigenous people face when accessing healthcare in Ottawa. This past year:

- 798 people were trained in the San'yas online training.
- Wabano hosted an Education Series throughout the year so that participants can continue their learning journey.

A total of 205 individuals participated in the webinars.



Screening of the film Gather

Wabano partnered with Just Food, (a non-profit that works towards vibrant, just and sustainable food and farming systems in Ottawa) for two online screenings of the film Gather in October 2020 and February 2021. Gather is a documentary that celebrates and honours the critical and leading role Indigenous peoples play in protecting biodiversity on earth as the basis of our shared food.

Videos

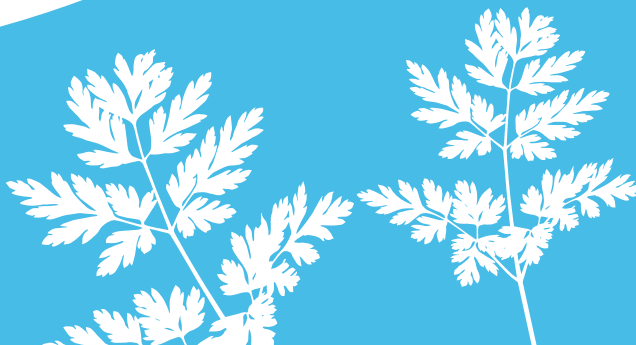
Wabano produced multiple short videos during the pandemic on various topics including urban gardening, fitness, cooking, drawing, singing, nutrition, drumming and culture. Check them out @WabanoCentre!

Launch of Wabano Legacy Series Videos

Wabano's Legacy Series videos were created to honour Elders who have generously shared teachings with us. We launched 3 videos this year:

- Water Teaching: First Nations Elder, Edna Manitowabi, shares traditional teachings about the importance and sacredness of water.
- Natural Medicines Teaching: First Nations Elder, Edna Manitowabi, shares traditional teachings on various natural medicines that can be found in your own backyard and in nature.
- Corn Teaching: Cultural educator, Dan Kimewon, shares First Nations teachings of corn and Three Sister plantings in both English and Ojibwe.

More videos are on their way. Check out Wabano's new Youtube channel: Wabano Legacy Series.



The Impact of Visiting

Clients' stories of how Wabano's services impacted them this past year

1. Jessie's Story: "Not Blue Suede Shoes, But Shoes"
2. Sage's Story: "Closing a Housing File, Opening to a New Life"
3. Pamela's Story: "It Starts with the Support of One"
4. Ron's Story: "The Reward of Home"



Not Blue Suede Shoes, but Shoes Nonetheless

Jessie's Story

In spring of 2021, Ottawa was immersed in the third wave of the COVID-19 lockdown. The weather was unusually mild but Ottawa-ites were hunkered down in their homes, focused on keeping themselves and their loved ones safe.

It was at this time that a fire erupted in an apartment building in Vanier, destroying multiple units. Jessie's home was one of them. In 2 short hours, he had lost everything.

Jessie grew up in Ottawa but his family connection goes back to Yellowknife. His mom was adopted at birth and she nor him got to be connected to their home Inuit community or her birth family. His mother accidentally overdosed when Jessie was young. Jessie has been dealing with this trauma for many years and working through his sobriety. When the fire hit, it put him into a tail spin.

Jessie reached out to Wabano for help, and we helped him find a treatment centre and reserve a spot. This seems like the point where this success story would end, but no.

Jessie was lined up to go into treatment and needed shoes to go there. The fire destroyed all of his belongings, and the shoes he was wearing had broken apart. His savings gone from emergency motel bills after losing his home. Again, he reached out to Wabano.

Now, normally getting shoes is not a difficult task, Wabano keeps a variety of emergency clothing items for clients but there were no size 12 shoes. As we were in our 3rd lockdown; shoes were considered a non-essential item and the Quebec-Ottawa border was closed, blocking our ability to get supplies on the Quebec side.

Jessie's case worker put a call out to the Wabano team and three pairs of size 12 shoes were donated to help him walk his healing path. Wabano may not be able to promise an easy life, a trauma-free life or fashion items like blue suede shoes, but we can get shoes and walk along side our clients on their healing journey.

Today, Jessie is in a new place and working his sobriety with the support of one of Wabano's addictions counsellors. And he has a new baby grandson.

"I am the same age that my mom was when she overdosed by accident. But I want to get old... be part of my grandson's life. There is a lot to look forward to."

Closing a Housing File, Opening to a New Life

Sage's Story (name changed for privacy)

Sage is a transgender male who grew up in the child welfare system. At a young age, he turned to substance abuse as a coping mechanism, which ultimately led to him being homeless and having to rely on shelters.

During the pandemic, Sage reached out to Wabano's Housing Team after spending over a year in shelters and on the streets of Ottawa. Within a few short weeks of being connected to a housing worker at

Wabano, Sage signed a lease for his own place. Wabano's financial support program allowed him to move in, purchase new furniture and to stock his new home with food.

"I needed people around me who could be kind, and not judge me. And I needed my culture. Wabano helped me get that."

Sage's housing file is now closed at Wabano, but his connection to Wabano certainly is not. He continues to access a variety of support services at Wabano. And in the year since Sage has been in his new home, he celebrated 6-months sobriety and has enrolled in school to continue his education.

"I've gone through so many hard things in my life. I hope that one day I can support other people through their tough times."



It Starts with the Support of One

Pamela's Story (name changed for privacy)

*We are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.
We are under full lockdown.
Grocery stores have empty shelves and prices are increasing.*

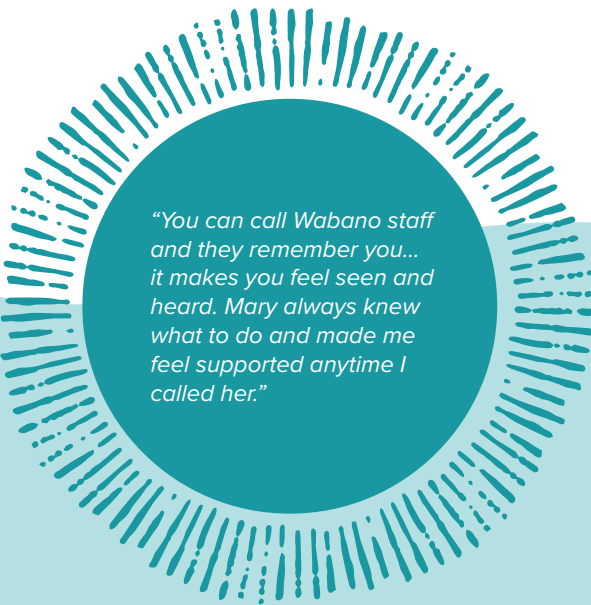
*Businesses that we rely on are all closed.
Transportation is minimal.*

*People are getting sick and dying.
People are afraid to go out.*

And you are trapped in an abusive situation at home. Your toddler of 18 months is apprehended by the Children's Aid Society and you then move into a women's shelter to seek safety from your abusive partner.

Imagine your relief when Wabano's support worker steps in to help.

Pamela didn't use the word relief when she first met Mary (Wabano's Support Worker), but her entire body showed it. Mary knew firsthand what it is like to be a young, single mom and used her lived-experience to help Pamela.



"You can call Wabano staff and they remember you... it makes you feel seen and heard. Mary always knew what to do and made me feel supported anytime I called her."

The first step was to reunite Pamela with her son.

To do this, Mary knew that, like all moms, Pamela would need a circle of care around both her and her son to be well. So, she worked with Pamela on developing a safety plan and advocated with the CAS, arranging third-party support for Pamela at CAS meetings. Pamela also:

- Received support to find housing, and Wabano helped her with furnishings -- things she could not have afforded otherwise
- Received food boxes, medicine bundles, and Christmas gifts to help with her transition
- Along with her toddler, became clients of Wabano's medical clinic
- Got connected to legal aid
- Began attending weekly Wellbriety program meetings led by Wabano's addictions counsellor, Frank and received a White Bison certificate for successfully completing this program
- Participated in Wabano's "Way we Visit" programming: medicine walks, zoom cooking classes and weekly Early Years outdoor play group with her toddler.

From the support of this circle of care, Pamela's son was returned to her.

But it began with the support of one.

When moms are having a hard time, Wabano always advocates for the provision of supports for the family rather than "removing children". With this mindset, Mary created a circle of care where Pamela receives culturally appropriate and supportive services so she and her child can grow and flourish. Wabano has become a place of belonging for Pamela and her child.

The Reward of Home

Ron's Story

There are many ways that we honour a life of service. There are awards, plaques, parties, recognition speeches – but not always for all of us. For many community leaders, a life of service can go unnoticed. And while we don't serve in order to be recognized, our Elders remind us that the act of recognition, the act of seeing, the act of honouring, is as much a gift to the giver as it is to the recipient.

Such is the case for Ron, a 78-year Mi'kmaq man, who lived most of his life in Ottawa and was present at the opening of Wabano in 1998.

Ron was actively involved in the Ottawa community. He volunteered at many Indigenous organizations and focused his efforts on vulnerable populations. He wrote letters to local Members of Parliament advocating for change. And while he worked for change in Ottawa, he never forgot his home community, often returning to do important work there as well.

As time went on, life proved challenging for Ron and his health suffered. He started to rely on the organizations and people he had once supported, to support him. Wabano became a part of his circle of care which included health care providers, community supports, and the seniors' team.

Through Ron's stories, Wabano's seniors team knew how much Ron had contributed and wanted to honour him in some way. With his health failing, Ron requested to return to his home community. This was challenging during the pandemic because his trip home involved interprovincial travel. The Wabano seniors team worked closely with his family and circle of care to coordinate the logistics to get Ron safely home.

Ron currently resides with his family in his home community, where he continues to share his stories and language with those around him. A reward for a life of giving.



Your support matters

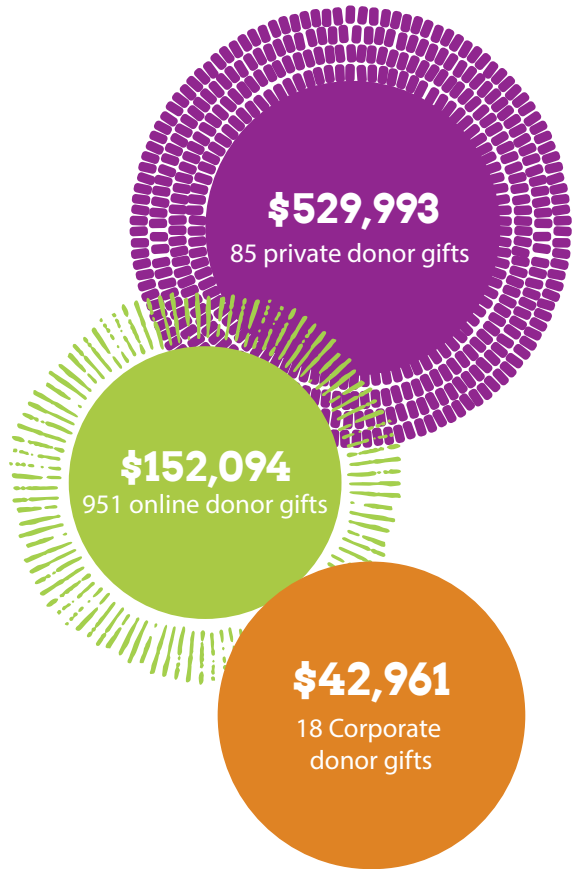
Wabano was humbled by the generous outpouring of support from the community this past year. In 2021, Wabano received donations totalling **\$725,049**.

Online auction

The community eagerly awaits Wabano's gala each year. Like all of Wabano's events, the pandemic had us reimagine our gala as well. In November 2020, Wabano launched our first online gala auction. Items included original artwork by Indigenous artists, jewellery, gift baskets and more. The auction raised over \$49,000 for Wabano.

The generosity of our donors enabled Wabano to do the activities you see throughout this book and to continue to:

- Better the lives of Indigenous children, youth, women, and seniors living in Ottawa;
- Change the cycle of poverty and unemployment among Indigenous people;
- Make possibilities into probabilities for the whole community;
- Sustain our work as a Centre of Excellence, sharing wise practices for Indigenous healing across the country; and
- Continue to provide COVID-19 outreach services to our most vulnerable community members.



How You Can Help

Support of Wabano can come in all kinds of ways.

Make a donation or have a commemorative pillar dedicated in the name of an individual or corporation. To give, please visit wabano.com. Charitable # 873580690-RR0001

Buy Wabano Fine Chocolates

Wabano Fine Chocolates is a line of premium handcrafted artisanal chocolates. Using the social enterprise model, profits from its sales are used to support Wabano programs. It's also an entrepreneurial and employment skills training program for Indigenous people who face barriers to employment.

Despite the pandemic, orders have increased, and the number of products offered has expanded. Wabano Fine Chocolates also partnered with a coffee subscription business which provided the social enterprise with a regular revenue stream. This has helped them try out an online store and learn new skills for when they eventually have their own online presence. The social enterprise continues to serve returning and new customers.

Place your order today! volunteer@wabano.com



Host your next meeting at Wabano

The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is known to many as one of the most beautiful buildings in the National Capital Region. The building, designed by the celebrated Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal, is inspired by the land it sits upon, and like the Rideau river nearby the building reflects the movement of the water with smooth, curvilinear forms.

The well-appointed facility offers 10,000 square feet of meeting space that is ideal for corporate, government and not-for-profit meetings that require a combination of plenary and break-out spaces. Its flexibility is perfect for formal dinners, receptions, symposiums and training sessions. Indigenous-inspired cuisine is offered to make any event or meeting a one-of-a-kind experience.

Although the pandemic is limiting our ability to host events at this time, we look forward to welcoming guests back into our facility in 2022. Reserve your dates early at wabano.com/events.



About Wabano

The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is an award-winning and internationally recognized healthcare facility located in Ottawa, Ontario. Wabano's unique model of care emphasizes the importance of nurturing the mind, body and spirit through the provision of a full medical clinic, mental wellness and addictions services, community and cultural programs, and community outreach. The result has been the creation of a place of belonging where culture flourishes in support of more than 17,000 Indigenous people.

Board of Directors

Wabano's nine-member board represents the urban Indigenous community in Ottawa. Elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting, each volunteer board position has a term of three years. Our volunteer Board Members represent the unique issues and characteristics of the urban Indigenous community in Ottawa. Wabano is grateful for the generous donation of their time and expertise to ensure that Wabano remains a space where the voices of the Original Peoples of this land are represented.

Brian Pelletier, President

Alfred Linklater, Vice-President

Colleen Whiteduck, Secretary

John Francis, Treasurer

Jennifer Francis

Valorie Whetung

Paul Skanks

Shaun Logue

Patricia Baxter



Our Vision

We envision a world in which all Indigenous people have achieved full and equitable access to the conditions of health. This includes pride in ancestry, cultural reclamation, peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable environment, resources, social justice, and where the gifts and wisdom of our cultures are recognized as valuable, distinctive and beautiful.

We believe that good *medicine* is characterized by:

- Reclaiming culture as a pillar of healing;
- The teaching and healing practices of Indigenous people;
- A contemporary model of quality primary healthcare;
- Focusing on the individual in the context of their family and the community;
- Believing in the wisdom of Elders, traditional healers, and teachers; and,
- Believing in the importance of traditional ceremony and celebration.

Our Mission Statement

The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is an urban health centre that:

- Provides quality, holistic, culturally-relevant health services to Ottawa's First Nation, Métis, and Inuit population;
- Engages in clinical, social, economic and cultural initiatives that promote the health of all Indigenous people;
- Promotes community-building through education and advocacy; and,
- Serves as a centre of excellence for urban Indigenous health.

Mandate

The main purpose of the Centre is to create and deliver services that will prevent ill health, treat illness and provide support and aftercare. Services are offered in a culturally sensitive way that welcomes, accepts and represents all Indigenous people.





Wabano

Wabano.com