

Annual Report 2023

Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

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Letter from the Director of Community Learning & Engagement



Angeline Nelson
*Director of Community
Learning & Engagement*

Aniin,

This past year has seen some growth and change but overall consistency. In January, we welcomed Alex to our team as our Program Assistant - she has kept us so organized and always ensures the kids are well-fed. New community and school partnerships were made as 5 new schools joined us for our second annual STEM Day event. We also hosted our largest ever Indigenous STEAM camp in the summer. The foundational and core community outreach programs that are our language and cultural programs are ongoing and continue to be filled. It is our privilege to do this work and we enjoy sharing a look back at the year.

In June, I finished the added responsibilities of being Acting Lead for Indigenous Engagement and welcomed Dr. Chantal Fiola as the Interim AVP, Indigenous. Again, I must thank the WiiChii team, our volunteers, and partners for going over and above in their work to support all of our programs.

For 2023, CanCode continued to be the largest funder of the Centre, specifically with our STEAM outreach programs. We welcomed Boeing as a new funder of our STEAM camp and were thankful for the ongoing support from funders like the Kingfisher Foundation, The Winnipeg Foundation, Jen Roblin and friends who support the Tea for WiiChii. As an externally funded Centre, we cannot do this important work without it.

– **Angeline Nelson**

Letter from the Program Coordinator



Julie Hiebert
Program Coordinator

Boozhoo,

Wii Chiiwaakanak was operating on full STEAM in 2023. We hosted a variety of different STEAM programs including Indigenous Content Creators camp over spring break, a two-day STEM Day on Campus, STEM Kids on Campus, STEM Explorers and Code Club and Indigenous STEAM Camp.

Wii Chiiwaakanak, in collaboration with Science Rendezvous, hosted our 2nd annual STEM Day on Campus. The two-day event took place over May 9 & 10, with over 500 students from 5 different schools engaging in 83 different workshop sessions at the University of Winnipeg. I want to thank all the schools that participated, the students, staff and teachers. We are also so grateful to the UW students, faculty and staff that made this event such a success.

The cultural programs at Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, like Learning Anishinaabemowin, Powwow Club, Regalia workshops, Sacred Seven and Women's Self Defense, continued to run throughout the year. The 2023 Regalia workshops included Leather Belts, Appliqué Moccasins, Jingle Dress and Beaded Accessories. These workshops provide Powwow Club participants the opportunity to design and make their own regalia for participation in Powwows. At the end of the year, we made the difficult decision to end the Sacred Seven program. We'd like to thank all the participants and facilitators over the years that helped make this program a success. The conclusion of this program has made space for the creation of a new Indigenous Craft group tailored for female and 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

The team we have at Wii Chii is always busy and I am so excited to see what 2024 will bring. If you are interested in our programming or would like more information, please contact us at wiiichii@uwinnipeg.ca, check out our website uwinnipeg.ca/wiiichii, or follow us on Facebook.

– Julie Hiebert



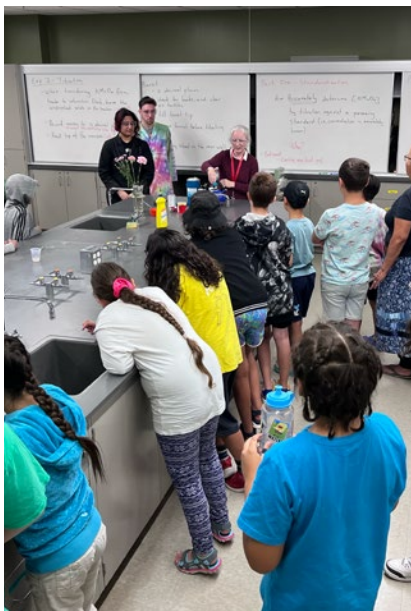
Year In Review

This was the first full year that our centre had remained open all year long since the pandemic - it was great to connect with everyone again.

Youth Supports:

STEAM Activities and Workshops

- › STEM Explorers and Code Club ran from January 12 to May 25, and again from September 21 to December 7. This program hosts up to 20 youth at the centre for a new STEM-related and coding workshop each week.
- › Indigenous Content Creators ran over spring break. Workshops were widespread and included photography, music production, ProCreate and multiple different types of video production.
- › Our second annual STEM Day with Wii Chii, in partnership with Science Rendezvous, hosted 500+ students all of whom were from the grades 3-8 classes from Sagkeeng Anicinaabe, Niji Mahkwa, William Whyte, David Livingstone and Earl Grey Schools.
- › Indigenous STEAM Camp hosted 200+ youth this summer. All 4 weeks were full of fun and learning for all the kids, summer students, teachers and staff involved. Some notable sessions were GPS and Drones with Rocky, a workshop with Boeing, and Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba.
- › Continuing a years-long partnership, our team delivered coding lessons to 1162 youth as part of WASAC's Adventure Kids Camp. We trained youth staff from the Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program (IYMP) to facilitate 38 coding sessions over 5 weeks of summer programming.
- › The STEM Kids on Campus program hosted classes in March and April from Niji Mahkwa and David Livingstone who took part in stop-motion animation, coding, 3D design, geography and chemistry activities.



Language and Cultural Programs and Initiatives:

- › This year marked the 10th year of Wii Chii's Powwow Club @ UWinnipeg. Powwow Club ran from January 17 to May 23 and September 19 to December 5 (no program on October 31) with 355 families and individuals registered and over 100 people attending each week. It also saw the largest powwow club night in September with over 250 people in the community gym.
- › Regalia workshops were hosted throughout Powwow Club. Each workshop took place over one weekend and included applique moccasins, leather belts, jingle dress and beaded accessories. Supplies, equipment and tools were provided that helped over 40 families learn to make regalia for their children.
- › To support some of the participants to finish their Regalia projects, we hosted a drop in sewing night on Mondays in April and May.
- › Sacred Seven - our girls and LGBTQ2S+ group - followed the same schedule as Powwow Club. The program centered around projects while still focusing on the overall development of the participants.
- › Continuing our language class model, each year, there is a beginner class in the fall and an advanced level class in the winter. Learning Anishinaabemowin II ran from January to April. With a beginner class running September to December. Across both sessions, there were over 140 people registered who worked on learning the basics of conversation in Ojibwe and becoming more confident in their speaking.
- › The women's self-defense program ran in the winter, from January to March, for 10 weeks and in the fall (October to December) for 9 weeks with each hosting an average of 45 individuals.
- › In partnership with MICEC, our teams co-hosted 2 renowned Anishinaabe artists - Shannon and Ryan Gustafson - to teach about medicine pouches and traditional split-toe moccasins.
- › Our summer students went medicine picking after the summer camp was finished. We went with the folks in Indigenous Engagement, Indigenous Studies, MDP, and the Registrar's Office to the Sandilands Provincial Park with the help of 2 guides.



Community Supports:

- › The public computer lab at Wii Chiiwaakanak is open 3 days a week and hosts 16 computers, a printing station, and is staffed to provide 1-1 support for resumes, cover letters, and share community resources.
- › This year was the first Honouring Indigenous Achievement, a new event that brings together the Spring Feast with the Aboriginal Student Service Centre's Indigenous graduation celebration. This event is designed to celebrate and honour Indigenous achievement in community by honouring our partners and volunteers; student success from the Collegiate, undergrads, graduates and graduate students; and faculty scholarly work.
- › For Orange Shirt Day, the Wii Chiiwaakanak team hosted an info and giveaway table providing booklets on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Every Child Matters stickers, and orange cupcakes.
- › Outside of our programming, we support many other community organizations by providing space, supplies and equipment when requested, for their workshops and events. Kani Kanichik's Heart Medicine Lodge, the UWinnipeg Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society chapter, Indigenous Summer Scholars Program, Moose Cree Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, and others utilized our community classroom this year.

Community Holiday Dinner

Wii Chiiwaakanak celebrated the holidays with the community by hosting our annual holiday dinner on campus. Our partners, Les Marmiton, Diversity Food Services, and Urban Systems as well as donations and volunteers from the University staff and faculty help make this a bigger event each year. The in-person event had 209 people attend this year - 119 of which were youth 17 & under - to a full holiday meal, 4 activity stations, a photo booth, entertainment and gifts for every child 17 & under.





Program Overview

In addition to our core programs listed below, we offer a variety of programs in partnership with other community organizations and workshops throughout the year. All our programs are meant to be as low-barrier as possible; thus, they are completely free, food or snacks are provided, and transportation needs are met with bus tickets for families or bussing from local schools.

Sacred Seven

A strength building project that focuses on empowering young women, girls, and two-spirit youth, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally through cultural knowledge, practices, and mentorship. The goal is to provide meaningful athletic, cultural and recreational experiences for youth that will build on their capacity to become role models, leaders and valuable contributors of the community.

Throughout the program, participants have an opportunity to engage with mentors while also developing new skills such as regalia making, self-defense, beading, Indigenous wellness, and much more.

Learning Anishinaabemowin

This weekly cultural program provides parents, children, and individuals of all ages with a chance to learn the Ojibwe language. Language resources are provided to participants. For this program 40 people either in-person or online are usually accommodated to allow the participants more interaction with the instructor.

Women's Self-Defence

A self-defense class for female identifying participants aged 12+ and led by Professor Jason Parenteau Behring Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Blackbelt. This class uses Jiu-Jitsu techniques to teach participants valuable self-defense skills, covering common escapes and movements effectively to help individuals have a stronger sense of personal safety. A guest instructor also assists in understanding the current laws in Manitoba. This program is offered twice a year - once in the fall and winter.

Pow Wow Club

Pow Wow Club is an intergenerational program to learn about pow wow dancing, songs, and the history and teachings behind them. Families participate in this program together with the youth often leading the way in dance. Regalia nights and celebration feasts are hosted at the end of each year.

Digital Literacy Programs

(including YouTuber and Intro to Photography)

Geared towards kids ages 9-12, these programs equip youth with basic digital media skills including: the basics of storyboarding; DSLR camera usage and techniques; video production; and editing. Each participant develops and creates their digital media from their own initial idea to the final product with help every step of the way. These in-person programs provide all equipment to use at the Centre.

STEM Explorers

This after-school program runs weekly on Thursdays from late September to May of each year. This program hosts the youth from the building belonging program at Spence Neighbourhood Association in an effort to ensure youth from the inner city have dedicated STEM opportunities. Program facilitators include Indigenous science students at UWinnipeg and first and second year Indigenous medical students from UManitoba's community service-learning program.

Indigenous STEAM Camp

(Science Technology Engineering Art Math)

This summer day camp hosted over 230 children and youth going into grades 1-8 on campus over four 1-week camps. Activities include hands-on experiments in labs on campus, math lessons, 3D design, multiple levels of coding, dissections, animation workshops, engineering activities and more. In addition to STEAM learning, youth participate in activities that combine Indigenous knowledge with other departments at the University of Winnipeg such as Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science and Biology. Indigenous knowledge keepers share traditional knowledge about many topics such as traditional medicines, star teachings, creation stories, traditional games, feasting ceremonies, water storage and more.

STEM on Campus

In partnership with inner city and north end schools this program hosts grades 5 and 6 classrooms over 6-8 weekly STEAM sessions. Youth participate in activities such as building and programming lego robotics, aerospace workshops, engineering activities, and 3D computer graphics to name a few.

STEM Day with Wii Chii

This 2-day event is filled with a variety of incredible STEM opportunities and is inspired by Science Rendezvous but with Wii Chii's community engagement approach. The focus is on inner city and north end schools, transportation needs are met, and lunch is provided. All classrooms are scheduled into 3 to 4 of the 18 different workshops throughout the day, such as coding, stethoscope and heart health, biology cell, squid dissection, stop-go animation, drones, procreate workshops, dry ice physics, and everyone's favourite the chemistry magic show.

Adventure Kids Summer Camp

In partnership with the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre (WASAC) the team from Wii Chiiwaakanak designs and delivers new coding activities to all the camp attendees. Our team brings our 40 programming laptops to up to 6 different program sites across the city to deliver the sessions to over 1200 youth.



Community Partnerships

Wii Chiiwaakanak partners with multiple community partners each year to build leadership opportunities and to better serve underserved communities. Here is one partnership we would like to highlight.

Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport and Achievement Centre (WASAC)

The University of Winnipeg and WASAC have been partners since 2007 - almost since our inception! One of their biggest programs is the Adventure Kids Camp which hosts thousands of children every summer from over 75 schools across the city. The grade 1-6 youth in their week-long camps have an opportunity to participate in numerous activities that support active living, sports of every kind, traditional games and cultural activities all while building connections with youth and mentors from all over. Their leadership model sees some of their participants become junior leaders who then have an opportunity to move up to become senior camp leaders in the years ahead.

In the past this camp has been hosted by the University of Winnipeg out of the Axworthy Recplex, with support from the Indigenous Affairs and Recreation departments. However, logistically for hosting that many children it was much easier to host their camp close to their home base at the Sargeant Tommy Prince Place that also has more child-friendly amenities like a pool, kitchen, and much more.

In 2018, with the team at WiiChiiwaakanak in the earlier stages of their STEAM outreach, our specific area supported UW's partnership with WASAC by delivering coding workshops to every one of their participants - even throughout the pandemic. Each year since then, we have engaged with the 600-1800 youth who participate in their annual Adventure Kids Camp.

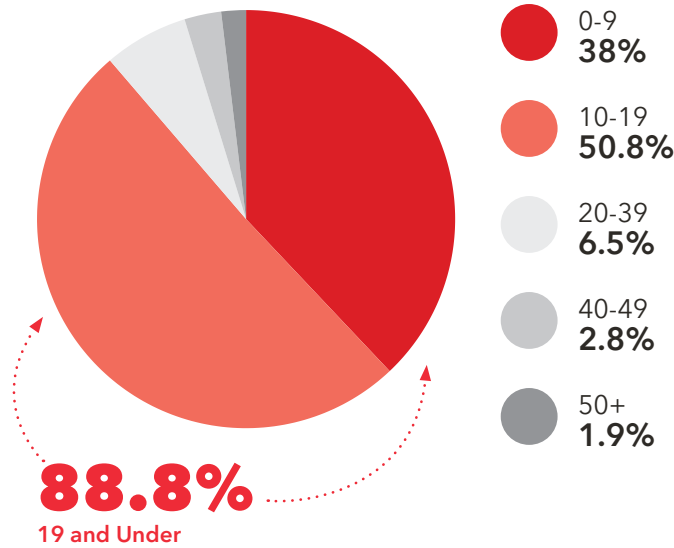


Our Year In Review

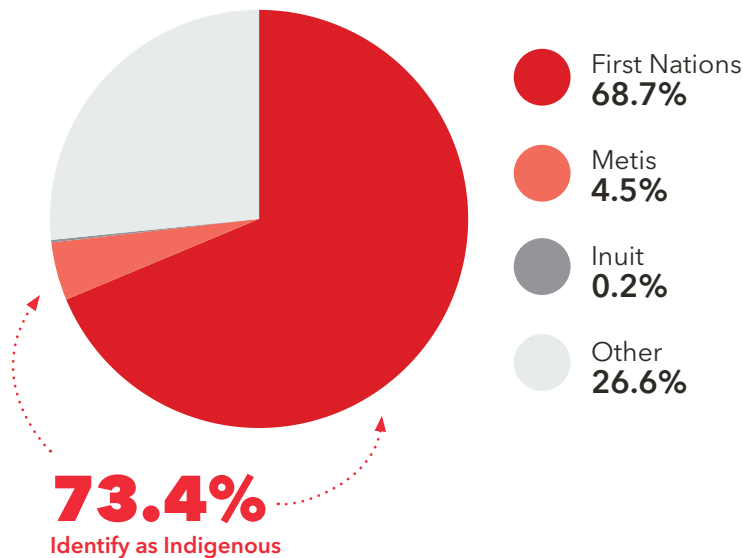
Who uses Wii Chii?

2,880 participants in the 2023-2024 fiscal year

Age Range



Ethnicity



24

Indigenous Program Facilitators

15

Different Programs

3,379

Visits to our STEAM Programs

5,276

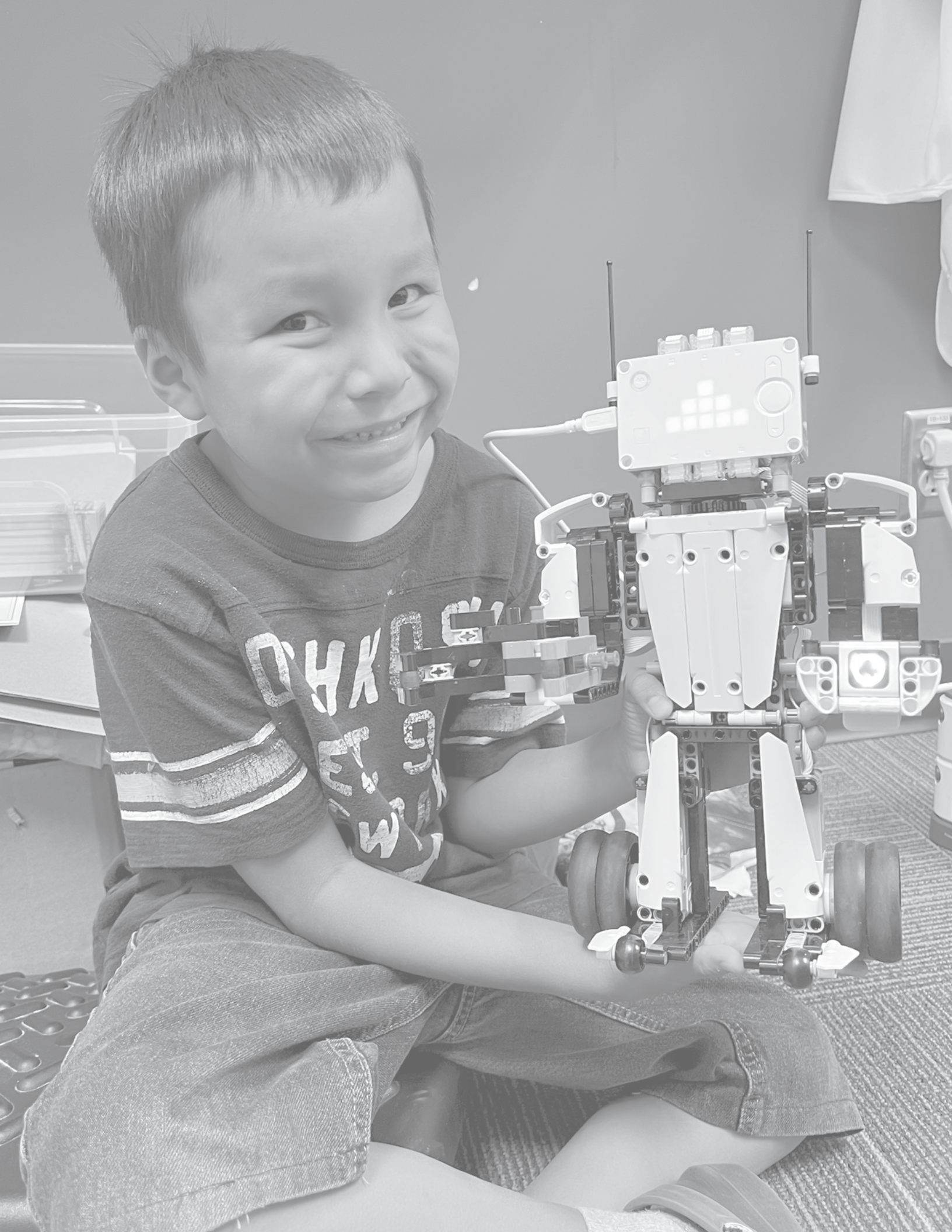
Visits to Language and Cultural Programming

2,162

Visits to our Community Outreach Events and Initiatives

54%

of Visitors Identify as Female



Our Funders

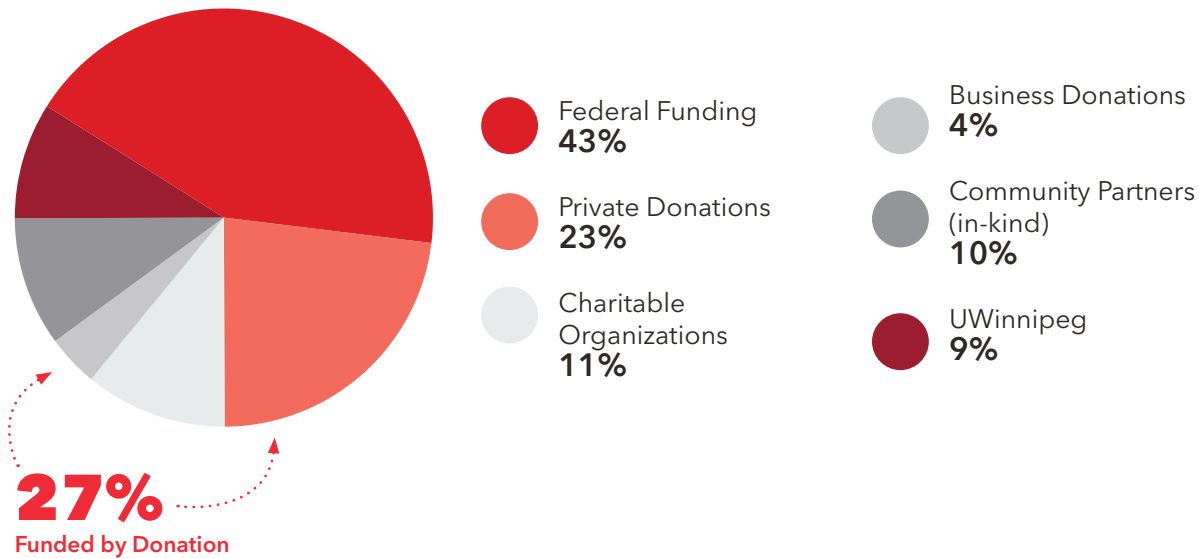
Our initiatives at Wii Chiiwaakanak are supported through diverse channels. Federal funding forms a sturdy foundation, complemented by private donations, charitable organizations, and business contributions. Community partners generously provide in-kind support, while UWinnipeg's commitment adds invaluable strength to our shared endeavors.



How is Wii Chii funded?

Total funding in the 2023-24 fiscal year: **\$392,959**

Funding Percentages



100,000+

Canada

10,000 - 24,999

BOEING

50,000 - 99,999

Kingfisher Foundation

<9,999

urban systems
FOUNDATION

25,000 - 49,999

THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION
For Good. Forever.

Jennifer Roblin & Friends

UWinnipeg Indigenous Engagement

CEDA
Community Education Development Association

Proceeds of UWinnipeg Foundation's Duff Roblin Dinner

UWinnipeg Faculty, Staff, Students, Retirees and Alumni

Our Partners

- › The University of Winnipeg Foundation
- › Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre
- › SNA's Building Belonging Program
- › Community Education Development Association
- › Sunshine House
- › Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba
- › Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society (.caISES) UWinnipeg chapter
- › UM Max Rady College of Medicine Service Learning
- › Niji Mahkwa School
- › Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre
- › Kani Kanichik Heart Medicine Lodge program
- › Urban Systems
- › Science Rendezvous
- › Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program





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