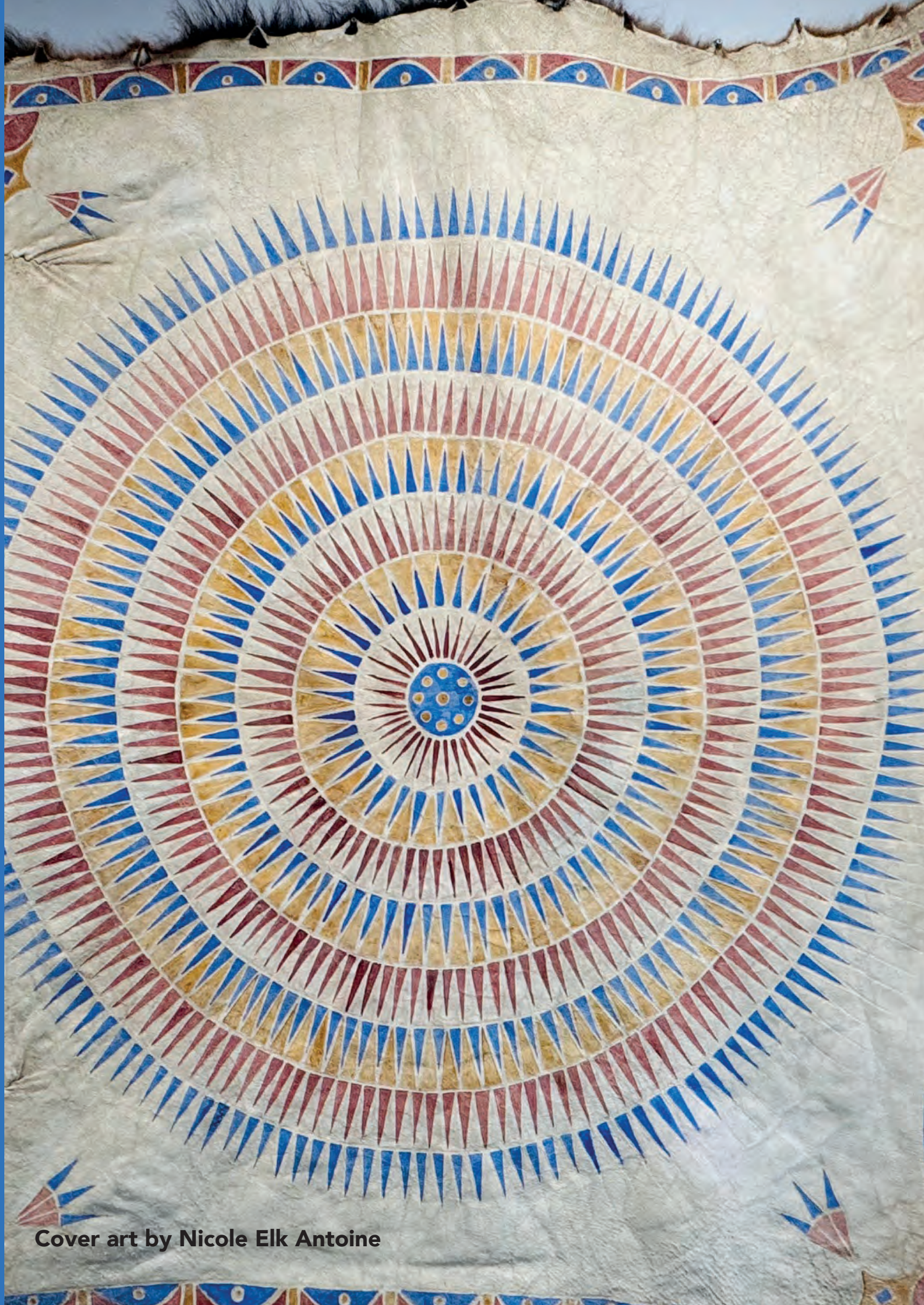


2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT





Cover art by Nicole Elk Antoine

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COUNCIL REPORT - COUNCILLOR CAROL JOHNSON

Han, I am proud to present my update for the year 2024. I would like to thank you all for your encouragement and support during my term as a member of the Council for the 2023-2025 term. I would like to share updates on the various programs and initiatives that we have been busy working on.

Health share portfolio with Councillor Jon Bell

Reviewing the current health department and health services offered through the SVHC. The goal is to improve the quality of services offered through an assessment and engagement process and improve communications on health services. The assessment will also identify capacity development needs of staff. The SVHC accreditation process is a high priority and development of a Community Health Plan. The Community Health Plan will be developed in consultation with the community. We are looking at the development of an SV Health Services Committee to assist in the assessment and development of the services mentioned above. More information will be provided as the work continues.

- Dedicated a space for the SVDN Recovery and Wellness at the community centre. Space for AA, mental health appointments, drop-ins, and traditional healing strategies. Incorporation of youth mental health and addictions prevention services. Currently looking for additional funding and staff.
- Long term goal is to secure funding for a healing/recovery centre that focuses on healing through modern and traditional/cultural methods through ceremony and connection. In the interim, programming will continue at the community centre.

Jordan's Principle

- SVDN purchased a new JP building in 2024. The JP building will be located near the SVHC. The purchase was through capital funds from 2024-2025 fiscal year as the previous JP building was utilized for classroom space.
- On February 10, 2025, Canada announced changes to the Jordan's Principle Program. Some of these changes include:
 - ◇ Purchase, construction or renovation of homes
 - ◇ Sporting events or training unless they are linked to the health, social or education needs of the child
 - ◇ International travel unless it is for exceptional medical needs of the child
 - ◇ Non-medical supports such as travel costs, respite care, child care, clothing, furniture, vehicles unless a letter of support is provided outlining the need by a medical professional
- Each request must include a detail of the child's needs, supporting documentation and cost breakdown.
- Group requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

COUNCIL REPORT

- SVDN JP continues to focus on the complex medical needs of the child and has continued to provide services for children with special needs. Please see our local JP office if you have any questions reading the services provided under the JP program.

Reaching Home Project

- Currently in year 4 out of a 6 year funding agreement. The RHP shelter is fully operational and opened in 2024 with 4 units and one of those units is a family unit.
- As of May 08, 2025 – the RHP has assisted with over 200 cases.
- The RHP has assisted with basic needs, shelter, and referrals and case management, on-going support with outside organizations for shelter, income assistance and mental health supports.

Employment and Training/PSE shared portfolio with Councillor Tony Tacan

- Through the meetings with Canada and Manitoba I had asked why SVDN does not received funding for the daycare and how many First Nations in Manitoba have licensed daycares and have received funding for new facilities? By addressing this at our IRIS table, we were able to get Manitoba to come and do an assessment on our daycare. After the assessment Manitoba stated that they will be able to fund 43 spots within the current daycare. This means that SVDN will receive additional funding for staff wages, the rates will remain low and there will be funding or capacity development for our staff.
- SVDN will be creating a parent board along with board policies. The timeline to have the facility licensed is the fall of 2025.
- The next step will be to work with the province to get funding for a new facility as their current facility is maxed at 46 children.
- 1.9 million of funding was identified for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 fiscal year for daycare and early years programming. This funding is through AMC and outlines the need for SVDN to receive direct funding for the programs and services that we offer and operate.

Governance shared with all Chief and Council

Internal Governance

- Updated the SVDN Human Resources Policy.
- Installed the Ibex system to track employee time sheets and automatic payroll systems.
- Reviewing and will be approving a finance policy
- Budgets complete and final funding reports in compliance with the FAA and ISC reporting requirements
- Year 2 on a FAA extension agreement, still collecting data for the renewal on a 5-year FAA agreement. Will continue to advocate for the additional support required such as a new school, healing/treatment centre, and overall increased funding for the community's health needs.

COUNCIL REPORT

Child and Family Law

Continue with the CF law and propose a fall date for a vote. Manitoba is committed to respecting our jurisdiction and the law will apply off reserve. There will be community info sessions during the summer months.

Intergovernmental Relations and Implementation Support (IRIS) Table

Continuation of the IRIS table. On-going discussions with Canada and Manitoba on Child and Family Services, Health, Education (school), Turtle Crossing and land conversion, updating the IRIS plan, again justifying the need for jurisdiction and increased funding.

Dakota Nations

Working with the Manitoba Dakota communities to document our shared Dakota history and mapping of our traditional territories. Establishment of a small working group from each community who will support this work. This will also include reclaiming our traditional territory, mapping of sacred sites, repatriation of sacred artifacts, creation of Dakota cultural centers within our territory (long term goal).

Canada provided a formal apology to the Dakota/Lakota in Canada on July 15, 2024. The apology was delivered by Crown Indigenous Relations Honourable Minister Gary Anandasangaree on behalf of Canada.

.....“For over 150 years, you have been denied the recognition and rights as Aboriginal peoples that were owed to you. But you were not spared the indignities and practices of assimilation that the Canadian government inflicted on Indigenous Peoples: the reserve system, the pass system, the Indian Act, the theft of your children and the assault on your culture and traditions through residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the child welfare system, and other devastating and racist policies that have harmed Indigenous Peoples in Canada and excluded your Nations from sharing in Canada’s growing economic wealth. You have shared in this experience, yet have been denied the constitutional recognition and protection that other Indigenous groups have.”..... Honourable Minister Gary Anandasangaree.

It was through this apology that Canada would address the issues identified by the Dakota/Lakota communities. However, despite the apology, there seems to be little to no movement or commitment to conclude Sioux Valley Dakota Nation’s claim. Sioux Valley will continue to address these issues with the result of concluding the claim. Sioux Valley will provide more information as it becomes available.

Information on the apology can be found here: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1720716708449/1720716733304>

COUNCIL REPORT

Communications shared portfolio with Councillor Melissa Hotain

- Communications team looks after the website, app, monitors and posts on social media, the radio station, has a studio for live updates and creates videos, manages the you-tube channel, photography, attends events and documents activities within SVDN.

Community Events shared portfolio with all Chief and Council

- Community events planning committee consists of staff from the various SVDN programs. Assist with planning community events such as the annual Christmas dinners (Sioux Valley, Brandon and Winnipeg) the previous May 5 MMIP walk, upcoming pow-wow, National Indigenous Day events.

Focus on youth and youth activities.

Youth sports:

- 67 youth in youth baseball from ages 4-14, 6 volunteer coaches and many parent volunteers. This is the first in many years. The season ends on June 20th, 2025 however, the practice and games will continue throughout the summer.
- 34 athletes to Manitoba indigenous Summer games in Norway House in July and more athletes for the Sagkeeng event in August.
- Commitment to assist with youth sports. Many young athletes in football, volleyball, running, and all other forms of sport.
- Included the youth in meetings and attending workshops. Met with the Junior Chief and Council to hear their concerns, support them with attendance at conferences, supported the 2024 grad trip, working with providing the grade 12 students Suicide Intervention training

COUNCIL REPORT - MELISSA HOTAIN

Han Mitakuyapi

The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) Annual Report 2024-2025 is provide information and share highlights of programs, services and various initiatives that occurred throughout this period. I am sharing high level information on some of the portfolios that I work on and jointly with some fellow Council.

Self Governing Indigenous Nations (SGIG's)

SVDN has been working together on a Collaborative Fiscal Process, since 2016, to support and build the capacity of our governments. Each SGIG has technicians (legal, economic, policy) that support ongoing research and advocacy, SVDN has been fortunate to participate and benefit from this, which has resulted in carving out specific funding from various federal government budgets since 2018. The results have been the infrastructure built since 2019, including the governance building, the community centre, the new water treatment plant, and housing renovations.

I was pleased to participated in advocacy week in October 2024 with the other SGIG Leadership to advocate for new funding in the areas of Infrastructure and Life Cycle Funding, Language Revitalization and Lands and Resource Management. Advocacy is ongoing to support the development and governance of our Dakota Nation.

Strategic Plan

In January 2024 we worked with the Directors and Program Managers to review the previous Strategic Plans that were developed by external consultants. Acknowledging we have the capacity internally to develop these documents, we merged and added to the information to develop a Strategic Plan for 2024-2029. There document highlights our vision, mission, and key strategic goals, objective and the activities to achieve them. They key strategic goals are:

Enhancing Governance – through strengthening our internal capacity, building effective partnerships and relationships, and improving our communications.

Transformation of Education – building a qualified workforce and supporting our children and youth to succeed through an enhanced delivery of education built on Dakota philosophy and worldview.

Promotion of Dakota Way of Life – revitalization of Dakota Wicohan through incorporation and protection of Dakota culture and language in our programs and service delivery.

Holistic Delivery of Health and Wellness – improving the health and wellness of our people through a multi faceted approach.

Lands and Economic Vitality – building a long-term sustainable plan for our lands, waters, and environment through an energy efficient and traditional knowledge lens.

COUNCIL REPORT

Housing, Infrastructure, and Emergency Management – understanding and building a long-term asset management plan for our housing and infrastructure. Developing a robust emergency management plan that contemplates climate change for the future.

We continue to meet quarterly to review the activities and update the plan as initiatives are achieved.

Brandon Indian Residential Schools Project

On February 19-22, 2024, we were pleased to co-host the Protecting our Ancestors Gathering in collaboration with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We give thanks to our Brandon Indian Residential Schools (BIRS) Team and MKO for planning and hosting a successful conference that brought together over 500 participants. The goal of the conference was to discuss the importance of the protection of ancestral remains, burial and sacred sites. Experts from local, regional, national, and international levels joined to present on these critical matters.

The Portfolio Holders provided ongoing guidance and advocated with MKO asking both the provincial and federal governments to develop legislation and policy for the protection of burial sites and sacred sites including those surrounding former Indian Residential Schools. There were several meetings between SVDN and governments and jointly with MKO to advance these important conversations.

Presentations were also made at the conference, and others including the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor National Gathering on Unmarked Burials in Gatineau, QC in October 2024, and the International Indigenous Research Conference in New Zealand in November 2024.

In 2025 the Province of Manitoba has agreed to develop a new law that will ensure the protection of Indigenous burial sites and sacred sites. We will be contributing to the development of this law and there will be focus groups in SVDN to seek community feedback in the summer of 2025.



Councillor Melissa Hotain presenting along with Grand Chief Garrison Settee at the National Gathering on Unmarked Burials

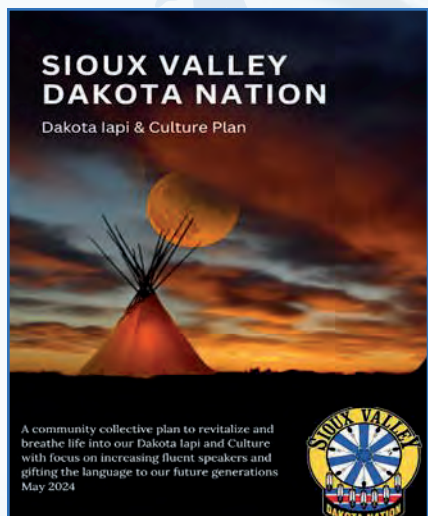


Councillor Melissa Hotain presenting Kimberly Murray, Independent Special Interlocutor with an orange shawl for her dedication and work to the children that never made it home.



Councillor Melissa Hotain presenting along with Meaghan Courchene, MKO at the International Indigenous Research Gathering

COUNCIL REPORT



In May 2024 participants attended the Dakota Language Gathering held in Whitecap Dakota Nation, an opportunity for educators and those that conduct language revitalization in SVDN to learn and network with the presenters. Those that attended the gathering were invited to debrief and discuss ways to implement more Dakota language and culture into our community. The resulting document was our Dakota lapi and Culture Plan which identified current work in Education and in the larger community to incorporate our Dakota ways of knowing and being and identified new initiatives to incorporate in the future.

On July 15th, 2024 in Whitecap Dakota Nation there was a formal apology from Canada read by Minister Gary Andasangaree, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to the Dakota and Lakota people. This was a long overdue apology, and we thank Whitecap Dakota Nation for persisting and coordinating this important and historic day. The day began with ceremony and lifting of the pipes and with prayer for the people.

Minister Anandasangaree, Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada stated "the recognition of the rightful place of the Dakota and Lakota people is significant and overdue, today is part of a new era of a nation-to-nation relationship. To move forward on dismantling the harmful legacies of colonialism and past wrongs." "Words are hollow if not followed by action, there is more work to do".



The Minister stated, "We are sorry", and "you are allies, you are not refugees", these were followed by hau's and trilling by the women. There was acknowledgement of the negative labelling, meager set aside of lands compared to treaty nations and settlers, exclusion of treaty and promises, however we did not relinquish our rights, and instead denied our rights. Despite racism, discrimination and social and economic exclusion and colonialism, our dignity remains unbroken, guided by our ancestors and drawing strength from our rich history, language and culture.

There is much work to be done, however despite the apology and acknowledgement of action, it will be slow and tied to the constraints, bureaucracy, and policies of the government. But we must not give up hope, whatever action is started must be done in consultation with the community, so that each successive leadership continues with a collective vision.

COUNCIL REPORT



As a follow up to this apology the Minister committed to visiting each Dakota and Lakota Nation. On Monday, August 12th, 2024, Minister Anandasangaree visited the Brandon Indian Residential School Site where he learned the important and sad history this left on not only our community but many others across Canada. He then toured the SVDN High School and heard the need for and importance of a new school for our students to learn and thrive in a safe and healthy environment. He then travelled out for a short visit and meeting in our community with leadership. It was an opportunity for him to hear our key priorities and needs, and to understand how he can help advance those issues at the federal government level.

Our community hosted our annual Wacipi on July 27-29, 2024, a time to welcome visitors from near and far and to celebrate our culture and traditions. A lot of work goes into the development, implementation, and post clean up of the powwow, we give thanks to our hardworking staff and volunteers for making our annual wacipi a success.



COUNCIL REPORT

Truth and Reconciliation Day

On September 30, 2024, we hosted our annual event to honour the Residential School Survivors and to remember the children who never made it home. A special honouring was done for our SVDN Residential School Survivors that attended the chilly and windy day, as they were gifted with orange starblankets by our youth and members of Junior Chief and Council.



Also on this day the BIRS team and advised by our Elders unveiled the memorial tipi which identifies the names of the known children that are buried near the BIRS. As in previous years we also welcomed the walkers that joined from the Riverbank Discovery Center.



Joining us on this special day were Mayor Jeff Fawcett and Hon. Glen Simard, Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations for the Province of Manitoba

Throughout the 2024 and 2025, SVDN hosted annual open houses held in SVDN, Brandon, and Winnipeg. An opportunity for our SVDN programs to share information with members living in these areas. We thank our various departments for creating educational information and spending time with members who came out to learn about programs and services being offered.



COUNCIL REPORT

Education

Have been happy to support the efforts taken to incorporate Dakota Transformation of Education a mandate given previously, with a goal for full immersion in the future. I have witnessed the opening song and prayer from our students in the early years schools and was pleased to hear testimonies from youth who have had positive impacts from the increased culture and language delivered in the schools.

The success of students also comes from the support and voices of our people to determine what is important for student learning. We need to be engaging and learning with more like-minded education people and schools who are also striving for this. I heard many wonderful speakers online at a SK education conference a few months ago, it was powerful to hear others promoting our Dakota, Nakota and other Indigenous worldviews, this is the positive mindset I focus on and I want to give thanks to our hard working Educators, many who have dedicated years to our children and for taking the time to learn the Dakota language through regular programming.

Dakota Language Project

In 2019 the first Dakota lapi Project identified over 200 fluent speakers, which was approximately 12% of our population, 5 years later this has estimated to have dropped to 7%, these numbers are critical and we need more efforts to ensure that the numbers of intermediate and fluent speakers are increased.

In 2020 I wrote a proposal for the Dakota lapi 2 project and received 500,000, it was funded for 2021-2023 but ran until March 2024. I finalized the necessary report to Canadian Heritage, but a lesson learned from this, was when there is change over in staff and lateness in filing reports, it can jeopardize future proposals. The Dakota lapi 3 project was submitted in 2023 and this was the funding that was used for the language programming during 2024 to March 2025 and led by Randall Wasicuna, it also supported our first ever Dakota Language Bowl.

This year I along with the Education Director submitted 2 proposals, one for education specific language programming and another to support community level programming and land based cultural workshops. Utilizing the feedback received from the Dakota Culture and Language Plan that was developed last year with community members after attending the Whitecap Dakota Language Conference. We anticipate receiving financial support to maintain and revitalize our Dakota lapi programming.

COUNCIL REPORT

Veteran's Affairs

There has been ongoing research on Dakota Veteran's throughout the years. In 2025 we contracted Wally Essie who has been doing research on his own for several years, to continue searching for Dakota Veteran's information. Our main goal is to create 2 educational resources, a book and posters highlighting information and the stories of our Dakota Veteran's. There is funding available through the Last Post Fund for headstones for Veteran's, our office can assist with completing applications.

Finance & Administration

Laws and policies previously developed need to be reviewed to ensure they are compliant with any corresponding legislation. It is important to update policies to meet the needs of the programs and services delivered for the people. In 2024 we contracted a First Nation consultant to review the SVDN Financial Administration Law (2018) and Policy, updates were made and following a review was approved for immediate implementation. Other policies that were updated included the Human Resources Policy Manual.

Dakota Oyate Lodge

I have provided high level advocacy and support for the Dakota Oyate Lodge Net Zero Project. A proposal was submitted a few years ago to Infrastructure Canada that aims to install solar and geothermal to the building, this will also include upgrades to the system in the building. I continue to receive updates and participate in meetings and ongoing monitoring of the project, it is in capable hands with both SVDN representatives and the project management team.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenues		Education	Social Services	Infrastructure	Band Support	Capital	Health	Band Programs	Governance	Economic Development	Total
Funding Revenue											
Indigenous Services Canada	\$	5,865,085	16,988,004	5,662,008	1,543,038	9,908,330	3,292,396	8,192,668	4,981,625	\$	56,433,154
Southern First Nations Network of Care			3,933,420								3,933,420
Canada Child Benefit			1,187,255								1,187,255
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation				524,114		384,401					908,515
Trust fund held by Federal Government								704			704
Recognition (deferred) of unexpended funding	\$	5,012	185,038	3,432,770	(253,224)	(3,622,095)	196,154	(4,385,899)	(276,467)		(4,718,711)
	\$	5,870,097	22,293,717	9,618,892	1,289,814	6,670,636	3,488,550	3,807,473	4,705,158	-	\$ 57,744,337
Own-source Revenue											
Retail sales										13,113,513	13,113,513
Other revenue		121,630	96,004	115,283	7,000	13,268	19,483	3,736,819	1,000	109,322	4,219,809
Rentals				3,631		338,148		-		253,304	595,083
Winterfest								521,522			521,522
Administrative fees								285,664			382,018
Care home fees									1,904		369,267
Interest										17,068	79,663
User fees											52,994
		121,630	465,271	31,514	135,080	355,751	329,777	21,480	2,904	13,483,207	19,333,869
		5,991,727	22,758,988	9,769,320	1,424,894	7,026,387	3,818,327	8,087,294	4,708,062	13,483,207	77,078,206
Total Revenue											
Expenses											
Operating Expenses											
Wages and benefits	\$	4,934,124	6,721,352	1,619,678	864,497	144,538	1,407,103	2,346,576	1,884,490	1,649,271	\$ 21,571,629
Repairs and maintenance		252,446	1,861,151	1,471,616	12,989	6,033,252	527,812	147,543	208,382	344,197	10,859,388
Cost of goods sold										9,052,339	9,052,339
Contracting			705,415	6,247,659		71,702	20	79,858	12,596		7,117,250
Activities		248,088	4,888,792				191,514	218,927			5,547,321
Supplies		347,530	2,073,316	268,577	156,780	28,360	201,383	236,290	333,862	147,754	3,793,852
Social assistance			2,640,863				12,478	102,489			313,652
Other operating expenses		50,720	1,453,549	180,253	20,394	256	67,355	960,348	28,974	259,026	3,020,875
Professional fees		1,921	114,957	291,876	335,228	41,881	2,601	319,036	823,940	202,631	2,134,071
Amortization (not allocated to any programs)											2,069,519
Utilities		86,184	644,703	316,241	36,326	20,735	42,995	575,993	70,724	147,820	1,941,721
Student tuition and support		1,739,943						195,916			1,935,859
Honorarium		232,613	21,268	54,724	44,025	8,034	80,486	572,887	874,719	1,888,756	3,793,852
Travel		59,549	497,001	27,363	28,779	6,092	360,558	173,058	680,400	16,774	1,849,574
Amortization (consolidated entities)		214,056	156,081			333,104				448,132	1,151,373
Training			344,905	29,860	15,881	23,922	8,214	207,373	37,362		667,517
Insurance			108,090	190,518	11,900	149,601	15,392	10,046	4,134	130,725	620,406
Winterfest								617,484			617,484
Administration Fees			336,029			40,350		106,997			483,376
Rent		18,560	125,108		23		244,183	6,790	5,429	74,798	474,891
Meetings and workshops		1,389	114,015					114,374	162,464		392,242
Community expenses								335,847			335,847
Manitoba Gaming Commission Fees										190,115	190,115
Interest on long-term debt		23,090		6,166		95,549					124,805
	\$	8,210,213	22,806,595	10,704,531	1,526,822	6,997,376	3,162,094	7,327,832	5,127,476	12,977,234	\$ 80,909,692
Transfers											
Transfers between programs		903,608		(903,608)		(640,000)		640,000			-
Transfer to CMHC reserves						(344,543)					(344,543)
Transfer to capital assets			(81,617)	(5,759,653)		(2,765,783)	(69,935)				(9,406,988)
	\$	903,608	(81,617)	(6,663,261)	-	(3,750,326)	(69,935)	640,000	-	-	\$ (9,751,531)
Total Expenses	\$	9,113,821	21,994,978	4,041,270	1,526,822	3,247,050	3,092,159	7,967,832	5,127,476	12,977,234	\$ 71,158,161
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$	(3,122,094)	764,010	5,728,050	(101,928)	3,779,337	726,168	119,462	(419,414)	515,973	\$ 5,920,045

BAND MEMBERSHIP

Staff:

Robin Mckay, Membership Manager

Introduction:

Band Membership provides a wide variety of different programs for our band members. Our key priority in band membership is registering our younger generations. Along with assisting all band members with their CIS status card renewals and applying for their new SCIS white status card. We also help band members with Estate Forms, Band Transfers, birth certificates, & Commissioner for Oath.

Key Issues/challenges:

Birth Registration

The key issue for this department is Birth Registration forms. Years ago, to register a child, you just walk into the office and sign a paper and your child was registered, that is the past, the process has changed. The application is 3 pages, and it is mandatory that both parents sign the birth registration form, and the "ORIGINAL" long form birth certificate has to go with your completed birth registration form. Both parents must have a VALID government issued I.D. to register a child, if you do not have all 3 components your application is returned incomplete.

Family Dynamic

Key issue #2 key issue is family dynamic. It is vital that both parents work together to complete the registration process for your child. Band Membership will not go look for your significant other to sign the birth registration form because you are not on talking terms. That is your responsibility as a parent to make sure you have everything when you drop off your birth registration forms.

Status Card Replacements

Key issue #3 is LOST/STOLEN status card replacements. To many band members are coming to me for a lost or stolen status card. Band members need to take better care of their status card. In the last 12 months I started a list of "Heavy Users", and the list is growing. I hear excuses like "I lost my card, my wallet got stolen, my partner cut it up, I can't find it, can you make me another one". Your status number is vital for all health & dental coverage, & for emergency purposes, so please take care of your status cards. I will start charging the \$50.00 dollar lost/stolen card fee now.

BAND MEMBERSHIP

Activities & Accomplishments:

Birth Registration Drive: for the last 60 days of 2024, Band membership put on a birth registration drive to get as many children registered by the end of the year. The start date was November 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, and with the help of Caroline Johnson, we set our target number at 50 children registered by January 1, 2025. As part of the birth registration drive, we gave all parents an incentive for registering their child/children. Canada Post plays a big part in all aspect of band membership and with the postal strike that started in November of 2025 - it didn't make our job any easier, but we pushed through and by the deadline we successfully registered 36 children, and 14 birth registration were in process. By the time this is published the remaining 14 children will be registered.

Throughout the year, Band membership was happy to be invited to other department events to set up information for birth registrations and status card clinics. Being invited to these events has helped band membership reach a lot of band members from all over Manitoba. We are working on many future events for band members, and with that, I will close with the year end population statistics.

Total Population Statistics for 2024

Total Population:	2748
On reserve:	1432
Off reserve:	1316
Male:	1315
Female:	1433
New birth registration: (by birth, band transfer)	71
Deaths:	27
Administrator of Estate:	10

Securing Our Rights
for Future Generations



Wipazoka Wakpa Oyate

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation



BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Staff:

- Katherine Nichols: Project Manager
- Brent Perrin: Field and Community Coordinator
- Ling Jin: Records Research Coordinator
- Ashley Austin: Research Assistant
- Kate Decter: Research and Development Specialist
- Christopher Mancuso: Geophysical Scientist



About Our Program

Guided by Dakota values and informed by the voices of Survivors, Elders, and families, the Brandon IRS Missing Children Investigation seeks to identify and honor children who were lost to the residential school system, while supporting healing for SVDN and all those affected. Using multi-methods like survivors' testimonies, archival research, and advanced geophysical and aerial surveying - the team searches for unmarked graves and gathers historical records to support commemoration and memorialization. These efforts aim to restore dignity and visibility to the children who never made it home by ensuring that their names and stories are not forgotten. Memorial spaces and monuments also provide Survivors, families and communities to gather and hold ceremonies. Ultimately, these initiatives are hoped to help transform the former Brandon IRS grounds from sites of pain into places of healing, remembrance, and learning.

We have made significant progress in identifying and documenting the names of children who died at the Brandon IRS, with 113 children from 21 affected communities from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario. We've also increased our names of children who attended Brandon IRS from 586 children to 1,477 students and shared with over 107 impacted communities. We have completed surveying several sites identified as top priorities through Elders, Survivors and historical documentation and have located more unmarked graves. By combining research, commemoration, technical innovation, and advocacy, we strive to honor the memory of those lost, while also building a strong foundation for future generations to carry forward this important work.



*New Every Child Matters
Grave Markers donated by
Pasqua First Nation for the
North Hill Burial Grounds at
the Brandon IRS*

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Key Issues and Challenges in 2024

- **Site Access Barriers:** Access to the Turtle Crossing Campground, containing the oldest IRS cemetery, remains unresolved due to ongoing land negotiations and above-market pricing. This limits our ability to safeguard and investigate key burial sites.
- **Legal and Policy Gaps:** There is still no comprehensive law in Canada to protect sacred sites or facilitate repatriation of Ancestors and cultural belongings. Jurisdictional gaps leave sacred sites vulnerable and complicate efforts for respectful return and commemoration.
- **Communication and Data Management:** A lack of centralized survivor and family databases, limited regional coordination, hampers efficient outreach and transparency. Duplication of efforts and inconsistent data management remain persistent challenges.
- **Archival Access:** Key historical records are scattered across multiple institutions with inconsistent cataloguing and access policies. This complicates verification of student identities and the reconstruction of accurate histories, underscoring the need for Indigenous-led data governance.

2024–2025 Activities and Accomplishments

Community Engagement and Knowledge Gathering

In the past year, the BIRS Missing Children Investigation team undertook a range of initiatives to advance the search for unmarked graves, support affected families and communities and continue advocacy work. Community engagement has been central to the investigation, with efforts to reach out to BIRS survivors, impacted and affected communities, and families of the children who never made it home. The team has actively shared research findings, technical methods and survivor perspectives at local, regional and national events, ensuring that survivors, families and community members are informed, involved and able to contribute their knowledge and priorities. Outreach has also included school-based activities, public education events and direct support for families seeking answers about the disappeared children.

Nations visited to share information on BIRS and to support BIRS survivors

- These visits have included trips to northern communities such as Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Nelson House), God's Lake First Nation (God's Lake Narrows), Kinosao Sipi Cree Nation (Norway House), Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Cross Lake), and Opaskwayak Cree Nation and connected with many others at IRS Gatherings.



Brandon IRS Missing Children Investigation Team in Norway House, attending their Survivors Gathering in June, 2024

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Information and education about BIRS and search strategies has been advanced through the production of documentary films, technical presentations and the delivery of Nation-to-Nation training. We expanded the Sacred Children Workshop Series – Wakanhezan Wokiksuye Makoce, which has provided hands-on training and capacity building to communities across Manitoba and Ontario including those represented by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (51 First Nations), and the Anishinabek Nation (39 First Nations). Together, these efforts are turning knowledge into action, building a foundation for sustainable community led investigations and ensuring the legacy of the residential school system is not forgotten.



Pictures above and below:Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, BIRS Missing Children Investigation teaching communities from Nishnawbe Aski Nation (Thunder Bay) and Anishinabek Nation (Sudbury).



BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

The Protecting Our Ancestors Conference, co-hosted by Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) and Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak (MKO) was held in Winnipeg, February 19-22, 2024. This national conference brought together over 500 participants from across Canada and beyond. Attendees included communities, policy and law experts, government delegates, and Indigenous leadership. The gathering aimed to advance Indigenous-led repatriation and the legal protection of ancestral remains and sacred burial sites. It also created space for meaningful conversations about what is needed and desired for the future protection and return of our Ancestors' remains and belongings.

The SVDN BIRS technical team played a vital role in the national conference, supporting logistics planning, inviting key speakers from Canada, USA and New Zealand to share their experiences and recommendations, and creating, delivering, and analyzing surveys to capture the voices of attendees. They also coordinated the attendance and participation of 20 SVDN Elders. The conference featured powerful presentations from SVDN Chief Vince Tacan, Councillor Melissa Hotain, Elder Lorraine Pompana, Katherine Nichols, and the SVDN Youth Council members Kolby Pratt, Wakpa McKay, Cera Hotain, and Alexis Antonie. Emcee Wendy Whitecloud along with Co-Emcee Ted Bland skillfully guided the proceedings, while Bryden Speiss and Daniza Depaola from the communications team captured the event's memorable moments. We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone at Wipazoka Wakpa—from the Youth Council to our Elders and Leadership—for your connection, contributions, and unwavering commitment to this sacred work. Special thanks also go to Billy McKay and Sam Hapa Junior for opening and closing the conference with song and ceremony.

Ultimately, this conference underscored that the work is far from over. The gathering reinforced that continued advocacy is essential to safeguard sacred sites across Canada and ensure lasting respect and protection for Indigenous heritage. It also highlighted the urgent need for Nations to begin developing their own repatriation protocols, policies, and laws to protect their Ancestors and bring them home for reburial.



Protecting the Ancestors - Chief Vincent Tacan

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION



Protecting the Ancestors Presenters (Left to Right)
- Kloby Pratt, Wakpa McKay, Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Cera Hotain, Alexis Antonie



Protecting the Ancestors Presenters (Left to Right)
- Katherine Nichols, Councillor Melissa Hotain, Lucy Bell, Jaime Lavallee, Shannon O'Loughlin, Maegan Courchene and Jamie Metzger



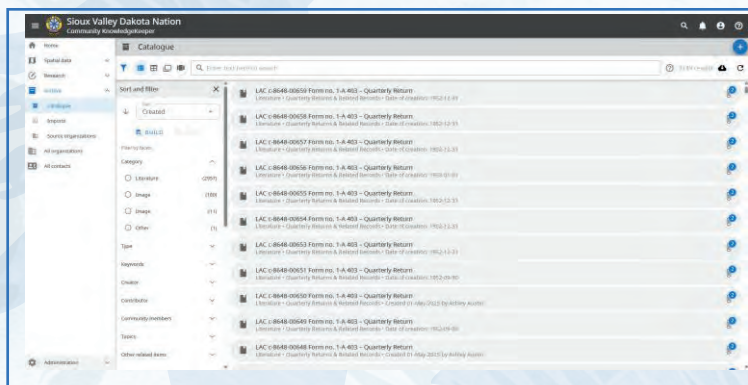
Protecting Our Ancestors - Billy McKay

Archival Research and Records Management

Over the past year, our team facilitated archival document requests from over 20 communities. A key outcome of this work was the development and organization of a comprehensive Community Knowledge Keeper (CKK) database detailing historical student attendance at Brandon IRS, segmented by community. This tool has been especially useful in providing targeted information to families and leadership, and in supporting cross-community collaboration in archival research. Additionally, we've offered support to other IRS projects by sharing findings and research strategies during archival researchers' meetings. This collaborative knowledge-sharing environment helps to reduce duplication, amplify efforts, and foster consistency across IRS-related research initiatives.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Additionally, significant progress was made in archival research and records management. Over 4,000 pages of archival documents and more than 200 photographs were digitized and uploaded to the CKK database. As of May 2025, we have identified and verified 113 children who died at Brandon IRS and 1,477 student names from 1895–1972. This information has been shared with 21 affected communities, supporting both family and community healing.



CKK Database Screenshot: Archival entries – textual records



Ling Jin searching for historical residential school documents at the Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Memorialization and Commemoration

This year, significant steps were taken to honor the memory of children lost to the Brandon Indian Residential School (IRS) and to support ongoing healing within the community. At the former Brandon IRS site, a new metal memorial tipi was installed, constructed by Pasqua First Nation's Pro Metal Company. The tipi is engraved with the names of 113 children who died in connection with the school, along with their 20 home communities—names identified through survivor testimonies and extensive archival research. Alongside the tipi, restored orange hearts, each bearing the names of the children to further honor their memory. As this work continues, additional names and communities will be added, ensuring the memorial remains a living testament to those lost.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION



Aerial View of Metal Memorial Tipi and Orange Heart Markers



Increased names of children from 98 to 113, with restored wood orange hearts with metal backing, fabricated by Ryan Wyshynski.

This year's Orange Shirt Day events placed a special emphasis on honoring survivors and remembering the children who never made it home. Survivors from Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) were recognized with handmade star blankets, presented by the Junior Chief and Council from Sioux Valley High School. Each survivor's name was called out and honored with a drum song. A special thanks go to Junior Chief and Council members—Jason McKay, Aleah Beaulieu, Feather Smoke, Rylie Bell, Tylan Wasteste, Peyton Dowd, and Meadow Leaming—for their hard work and dedication to this event.



SVDN Survivors blanketed by Junior Chief and Council Members

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

The event culminated in the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the memorial tipi. In a powerful gesture symbolizing both remembrance and hope, the ribbon was cut by a residential school survivor alongside a youth, bridging generations. The Sioux Valley Dakota Unity Riders took part in the proceedings, arriving on horseback to honor the children and demonstrate community solidarity. As a living bridge between past and present, the Dakota Unity Riders' participation serves as both a form of cultural preservation and a call to action, inspiring ongoing remembrance and healing. Tobacco ties were offered in prayer for the missing children, and a drum honor song was performed, grounding the ceremony in tradition and community spirit.



Metal Tipi Monument Dedication Ceremony

Together, these efforts ensure that the legacy of the residential school system is acknowledged and remembered, while transforming the former school grounds into a place of dignity, education, and healing for generations to come.

Looking ahead, we are working towards creating a permanent, purpose-built structure at the site to accommodate the sacred fire that is central to ceremonies and gatherings. Plans are underway for a round facility that will include a dedicated fire ring and seating, providing a respectful and welcoming space for reflection, prayer, and community connection during events. In addition, a memorial garden and interpretive trails with educational signage are being developed and installed, with community members actively guiding the design and plant selection to ensure these spaces reflect shared values and foster a sense of belonging.

Supporting Site Visits

This past year, we have made it a priority to support and facilitate site visits to the Brandon IRS, as these experiences offer families, survivors, and community members valuable opportunities for reflection, healing, and education. These visits allow participants to connect with the history and legacy of the residential school system in a meaningful way. By working closely with families and communities, we ensure each visit is respectful and supportive, offering site visits, and the presence of SVDN Elders and Survivors when possible. Our team and SVDN leadership also assist with logistics such as transportation and accessibility, making these visits as inclusive and responsive to individual needs as possible.

In addition to supporting individual families and groups, we have welcomed organizations and community groups who are committed to raising awareness about the ongoing impacts of residential schools and promoting the Every Child Matters initiative. These visits often include commemorative ceremonies, educational activities, and opportunities for dialogue and learning.



This year, Winnipeg motorcyclists arrived at Grand Valley Park in memory of the children who attended Brandon IRS. The event included a performance by the C-Weed Band and a welcoming address from Councillor Jon Bell, highlighting the importance of community connection and remembrance.

Through these site visits and community events, we continue to foster understanding, healing, and solidarity among all those affected by the legacy of the Brandon IRS.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Advanced Fieldwork and Technical Innovation

During the 2024–2025 fieldwork season, the Brandon IRS Missing Children Investigation achieved important milestones in the search for unmarked grave sites. Advanced geophysical surveys were completed at multiple high-priority locations. Notably, several new suspected unmarked graves were identified this season. The investigation now actively encompasses 19 sites, identified through a combination of survivor testimony, archival research, historical aerial photography, and forensic search methods. The team employs a comprehensive suite of advanced technologies—including ground-penetrating radar (GPR), electromagnetic induction profiling, magnetometry, aerial drone mapping, and targeted soil test pitting—to ensure a thorough and reliable assessment of each site.



Ling Jin and Christopher Mancuso upon completion of testing for advanced drone pilot license (both passed!)



Ashley Austin assisting with Electromagnetic (EM) Survey

Methodologies were further refined this year, with precise grid-based surveys, drone photogrammetry, and enhanced data processing techniques such as amplitude attribute analysis and pseudo-relief filtering. Geophysical surveying played a central role, utilizing ground-penetrating radar (GPR) with both 500 MHz and 250 MHz antennas for detailed subsurface imaging, as well as electromagnetic induction profiling to assess soil conductivity and magnetic susceptibility up to three meters deep. Daily soil moisture estimates, and careful calibration ensured data accuracy, while survey grids were established using local coordinate systems and supported by high-resolution drone-based digital terrain models.



Christopher Mancuso conducting GPR Survey with 250 Mhz Antenna

The acquisition of new equipment, including a magnetometer system and SPIDAR GPR array, has enabled simultaneous surveys and improved access to challenging terrains, such as treed and marshy areas. All fieldwork is conducted under the guidance of SVDN Elders and Survivors, with protocols developed in consultation with the Manitoba Heritage Resource Branch and in accordance with community wishes. The team is committed to transparent reporting and ongoing collaboration with leadership, families, and the broader community, ensuring that each step of the investigation honors the memory of the children and supports healing for all those affected.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION



Brent Perrin conducting magnetometer survey and magnetic monitoring station

Advocacy and Partnerships

We continue to lead advocacy efforts to protect sacred sites, advance repatriation, and uphold justice for residential school Survivors and families. The devastating legacy of the residential school system, which forcibly removed an estimated 150,000 children from their families and communities across Canada, underscores the urgency of this work. To put this in perspective: if we held a minute of silence for each of those children, we would be silent for roughly 104 days. This powerful reality drives our commitment to ensuring that the children who never returned home are never forgotten.

In partnership with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) and other Indigenous organizations, we have strongly advocated for new provincial legislation to protect Indigenous burial sites and sacred places. Our efforts contributed directly to Manitoba's recent commitment to develop new stand-alone legislation for the respectful care and return of Indigenous ancestors and their cultural belongings. SVDN's leadership continues to call on the Manitoba government, Federal government and City of Brandon to protect the children's cemetery within Turtle Crossing Campground. These advocacy efforts are grounded in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly those related to the protection of residential school cemeteries and the dignified care of Ancestors.

Beyond sacred burial site protection, SVDN is deeply engaged in the repatriation of Ancestors and cultural belongings. This summer, we will host community engagement sessions for everyone interested in the vital work of returning Ancestors and their cultural belongings, as well as protecting sacred sites.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

These sessions will address the pressing need for improved legislation and highlight the importance of community voices and knowledge in shaping a path forward that truly reflects Dakota values and traditions. More information about these engagement sessions will be shared as soon as event details are confirmed. We encourage everyone to stay tuned for updates and to join us in this important work.



SVDN and MKO leadership and policy teams strategy meeting in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, focused on protecting the Brandon IRS children burial sites.



SVDN Councillor Melissa Hotain and MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee present at the final Special Interlocutors gathering. Their joint presentation highlighted the ongoing challenges in accessing residential school sites to locate unmarked graves, the importance of collaboration, and the need to develop laws to safeguard these sacred areas.

BRANDON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (IRS) MISSING CHILDREN INVESTIGATION

Looking Ahead

As we move forward, the SVDN Brandon IRS Missing Children Investigation remains committed to deepening our work and strengthening our impact for Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and all affected communities. In the coming year, we will continue to prioritize engagement with survivors, Elders, and families, ensuring their voices guide every decision and next step. Our technical team is preparing for an expanded field season, using upgraded equipment and refined search methods to investigate additional sites and further improve the accuracy of our findings. We are also planning to launch a new website, which will make information, resources, and updates more accessible to families, survivors, and partner organizations, especially those living outside the immediate area.

Our commemoration efforts will continue, with the installation of a permanent sacred fire pit, the creation of a memorial garden, and the addition of interpretive trails and educational signage guided by Dakota values and community input. We will also keep working to identify and document the names of children and survivors, expand our archival research, and strengthen the Community Knowledge Keeper database.

At the same time, we recognize the ongoing challenges we face, including site access barriers, and gaps in legal protection for sacred sites. Advocacy for sustainable funding and new legislation will remain a priority, as will efforts to improve communication, data management, and collaboration with other communities and partners. Above all, we are driven by a sense of urgency to gather the stories and wisdom of survivors while we still can.

At the close of this year, we stand together in deep respect for the children who never returned home and in gratitude for the strength and guidance of survivors, families, and community members who have led the way. Every name recovered, every story shared, and every step taken in ceremony and research brings us closer to restoring dignity and truth. As we carry this work forward, we remain committed to honoring those lost, supporting healing, and building a legacy of remembrance and hope.

With respect and gratitude,

BIRS Missing Children Investigation Team

COMMUNICATIONS

Staff:

- Elton Taylor, Communications Coordinator
- Bill Taylor, KODA Announcer & Event MC
- Bryden Speiss, Media Editor

We handle a majority of SVDN's general communications with the community. We manage our multiple websites (SVDN Governance & Grand Valley Park), our social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc.), our Mobile App, our radio station KODA 93.5 FM and our Community Newsletters. SVDN Communications is proud of all we've been able to accomplish in the last year, which was to continue providing community updates through our multiple lines of communication and capture many great moments of SVDN by featuring our multiple events and activities.

We have also taken on some additional roles in recent years by doing school portraits for the Sioux Valley School, and Graduation portraits for our Kindergarten and Mature 12 Grads. We are constantly expanding our roles, content and material we provide for SVDN. We hope to be able to provide "Elder Portraits" for our members in the coming year and we look forward to creating some beautiful images.

We continue to provide basic services for our events such as sound, photos, video, projections, and live-streams. We've done multiple live-streams over the past year, specifically the Dakota Language classes that were provided over the winter months. We are hoping that programs and opportunities such as those will continue this year and we look forward to being able to bring those to the public as well. We are hoping to possibly incorporate things such as Zoom to assist in making some events more interactive for those who cannot attend in person.

As our roles and services continue to expand, we anticipate our department will expand in the future and we will continue to upgrade and update our abilities to grow along with the ever changing world of Communications.

DAKOTANET/IT

Staff:

- Gerald Thunderbird-Sky, Director of IT/ Manager of DakotaNET
- Jon Thunderbird-Sky, Field Operations Technician
- Cora Crow-Demas, Receptionist
- Connor Alexander, Casual Network Administrator

Introduction:

DakotaNET is the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation owned and operated internet service provider. We provide a hybrid network of fiber to the home and fixed wireless to the home for the community as well as surrounding communities and farms.

Key Issues/Challenges:

Issue – We require customers to sign deduction forms and/or sign up for online payments through our payment portal to ensure you don't fall behind on your bill. Disconnects will be a monthly occurrence now to ensure customers continue to pay their bills.

Issue – Many customers internet packages weren't changed when they went from wireless to fiber and are paying 60 a month when they should be paying 75 as the minimum fiber package. We will automatically be changing these customers to the 75 a month package starting July 1. Anyone 65+ should be on the Elder's package to save money. We will not slow down your internet with this change, we need ID to confirm your age, and the bill is in your name and/or house is in your name. We also won't change your previous bills to the lower rate, it will start from the date you call our receptionist to make the change over the phone.

Challenge – We have many homes that didn't have fiber installed either due to dangerous dogs outside or no one home when the fiber installers came or recently built homes after the initial install of the fiber. We are pushing to try install a bunch this year. However, we will only be doing homes where the internet bill is paid off and consistently being paid. We are also going to work with housing to have all new homes built moving forward automatically added to an install list for fiber. As budget permits and customers start to pay off their debt and we have more cashflow, we will continue to complete fiber installs on all homes to ensure the best possible service for the community.



Challenge – We had many damaged Wi-Fi routers replaced and were unable to rename them in our system during the CGNAT migration so many have odd Wi-Fi names and passwords. We ask that you call DakotaNET receptionist and leave that Wi-Fi name with her and your preferred Wi-Fi name and password so we can ensure its labelled properly and secured. (Example of an odd Wi-Fi name: CC4F0C43C8C9)

Issue – We want to remind customers that any damage to the fiber splice tray, the Wi-Fi router, or fiber optic cable will be added to your internet bill. These repairs are not cheap and not fast. Please remember that this cable is glass and not copper, so it is incredibly delicate. Here are the average costs of repair.

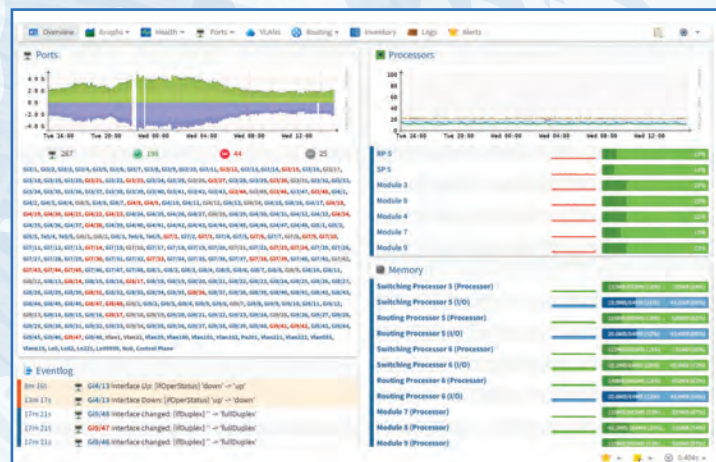
- Dog chewed outside cable or fiber cut outside - \$850
- Splice tray damaged or cut - \$250
- New router install due to damage - \$225

Challenge – We have many customers with old wireless equipment on their roofs. We are hoping to slowly remove those over the spring, summer, and fall. We ask that you unplug the old equipment and ensure the power supply is given to Jon or Connor when they remove the unit from your home. Here is the photo of the old power supply that we need to keep.



Activities and Accomplishments:

We successfully migrated our network to CGNAT to better protect from outside attacks and lower our monthly bill for public IP usage. We also ran out of Public IPs and needed to find a solution and this worked very well. There were a few hiccups as with any major upgrade, but we got them worked out. We also installed a new server that monitors the fiber ports and gives us real-time analytics to determine ports that might need to upgrade their speed packages due to using all their bandwidth or if there is issues with their connection, we can see the port and pull



DAKOTANET/IT

data instantly to quicker diagnose the issue. It's called Observium and has proven very helpful already. Here are photos of the CGNAT Router and a screenshot of Observium's interface.

We are also in the process of upgrading the backhaul and access point in the northwest direction on our tower at Petro. The current backhaul maxes out at 400Mbps and has been in operation since before we even had fiber ran to our community. It provides internet to our customers in Alexander, Oak Lake, Kenton and everywhere in between. The new backhaul will increase capacity to 1Gbps which is more than double its current capacity. This will enable us to fully utilize the new access point and start providing better speed packages to community members that can't see any other tower or are unable to be connected to the fiber network. We are starting with only 4 customers on the new access point for a month to test its capacity and quality before we migrate all the customers to this access point. We are hoping to have the equipment installed before the beginning of June. Here's a photo of the new equipment that will be installed on Petro Tower.





DAKOTA LANGUAGE PROJECT

Staff:

- Randell Wasicuna, Coordinator
- Oswald McKay, Language Advisor
- Jace Pratt, Language Advisor
- Eleanor Elk, Language Advisor

INTRODUCTION

Upon taking on the duties of the Dakota Language Coordinator effective July 2024, I was informed of the history of the program. These programs are proposal based with funding requested from the federal government. The first project began in 2019, the second project ran from 2021-2024, the third project ran from 2024-2025 which I oversaw and included the following deliverables: Dakota language programming (in person and online), language app, language plan, translation, cultural workshops, two written resources, and written curriculum. All deliverables were achieved ending March 31, 2025, the content for the language app is ongoing as information is uploaded into the software.

DAKOTA IAPI III ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Culture Camp/Workshop

A Dakota Iapi cultural camp was held August 20-22, 2024 to introduce the program and myself. Elders and Traditional Harvesters were asked to participate and share knowledge on culture and language with the participants (adults and children) including the importance of traditional roles and responsibilities, ceremonies, protocols and traditions in our culture. Land based cultural activities were conducted with the participants and traditional foods were provided.

Dakota Iapi Classes

Language classes were conducted and led by the Language Teachers, all classes were recorded and uploaded on our YouTube channel. The importance of documenting and utilizing these videos as future learning tools is imperative as not all community members are able to attend in person sessions.

Dakota Language Bowl

SVDN hosted our first annual Dakota Language Bowl which was a success. There was positive feedback and response from the community and all those that participated in this event. We give thanks to all that helped organize the event including Education Staff, Elders, Language Instructors, SVDN Finance for this assistance, and Communications for audio and visual set up and going live for the event.

DAKOTA LANGUAGE PROJECT

The Winners from each category are as follows.

- **Junior Category:** Sioux Valley Dakota Nation – Landon McKay, Kenzington Elk, Brooklyn Garson, Aysia Antoine and Dreka McKay.
- **Teen Category:** Standing Buffalo – Mahpiya Redman, Coulson Redman, Ransom Ryder, Meleah Isnana.
- **Intermediate Adult:** Birdtail Sioux - Lisa Bunn, Pearl Hanska, Laureen Bunn and Yvonne Bearbull
- **Advance Adult:** Sioux Valley Dakota Nation - Pam Bunn, Nancy Hapa, Amanda Ledoux and Darryl Hapa

There were many positive impacts from this event which included, bringing community and fellow Dakota relatives together in a good way to share meals and visiting, enjoyment and a fun learning experience for all participants.

The school sent three teams to compete the Dakota Dunes/Whitecap Language Bowl held in SK that was held May 20-23, 2025.

Dakota Language App

A new Dakota Language App was purchased toward the end of the fiscal year, work is underway to upload the Dakota language information which has been collected and documented to date. We are working with Communications to have this app running this fall.

Future Plans for 2025-2030

Increasing Fluency Rate - our main goal is to get young parents involved with their children and make learning the language fun. This can start with after school programming with different departments that include activities that apply using Dakota lapi.

Elder Meetings - we would like to utilize the Elders throughout the schools, classrooms, and programs. We need to reach out to departments and be able to provide them a list of Elders who are willing and able to work.

Culture Camps/activities - we would like to create more Dakota lapi activities, culture camps, after school programs, and sports. During the activities, we can have our elders speaking the language throughout (also translating into English).

Classroom Teachings/sentence building - having more classroom teachings via livestream, as I feel a lot of our viewers and people enjoyed it. This time we can try including more Elders, more discussions. We will invite elders and people to come up and enjoy discussions and storytelling.

DAKOTA LANGUAGE PROJECT

The Dakota lapi Bowl - this is something I believe would be a great activity to keep going, year after year. We had our first annual Dakota lapi Bowl that everyone seemed to enjoy. There are certain things that I believe we could work on, including more time for planning.

The Dakota lapi App - this is a goal that is going to be worked on for years to come as we started a working relationship with the Contego Company out of Calgary that develops software. We are in the early stages of creating the app and providing some translations. With this app, we would be able to edit, upload and create more content as we see fit.

Land Based Videos - in the summer, we would like to make, create and upload video content of different activities (hunting, fishing, trapping, sewing, cooking, medicine picking, songs, male/female roles, chopping wood) translated from Dakota into English and uploaded for viewers.

Creating Short videos - a great idea we would like to work on is making short videos of an Elder or fluent speaker, attending a different department, and having short conversations in Dakota with someone from the department. For example, Ozzie can pull up to the gas bar, greet the workers in Dakota, have them say something back, create a small conversation in Dakota, explain how much gas, which pump, how was your day, etc. The conversation can vary from department to department. I believe this is a great way to get everyone involved and that everyone working in the community will know the basic greetings and conversations in Dakota lapi.

A Dakota lapi Resource Center – a place we could have classes, have a variety of resources/books/video and a place for the elders to gather. Along with recording equipment in case we wanted to video a storytelling session, songs, prayers etc. We have a lot of teaching tools and resources that a lot of the community members didn't know we had. If we can make these available to community members, or people who want to learn, that could be a place to go. This could also be a place that can provide programs and departments to Elders that they need for specific events or activities. We could have a list of elders that we could give the opportunity to share their knowledge.

Creating our own Books - with the last program, it was required that we need to produce 2 booklets of Dakota words/phrases. I think we need to continue this and have a library of our own material from our own elders. Where these can be stored at the Dakota lapi Resource Center.

EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION:

The fiscal year of April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025, saw major investment in clinician and resource supports for our children, expansion of the early Years facilities, improvements in transportation, and a major focus on Dakota Language and Ways of Knowing, Learning & Doing.

The student enrolment in Sioux Valley Education is as follows;

Early Years (HeadStart - Grade 3):	122
Middle Years (Grades 4 - 8):	140
Sioux Valley High School (Grades 9 - 12):	105
Provincial Students:	17
TOTAL:	384

Activities/Accomplishments:

Dakota Immersion

With a mandate for development and Implementation of Dakota Immersion for Early Years to Eighth grade and dual track for Grades nine to twelve, a comprehensive focus on Dakod' lapi and Dakod Wicoh'an was initiated. Along with student learning, a requirement for all staff to learn to understand and attain conversational Dakota was also initiated. We are a Dakota Oyate, our Children are Dakota, and our mandate is to provide Dakota Immersion therefore our staff must also support this mandate and support our children in developing their Dako' lapi skills, and Dakod Wicoh'an understandings.

Clinician, Resource Team

As a Dakota Oyate Education System, we are the only First Nation School with a full Clinician and Resource team supporting our children: School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist, a half time Physio therapist, and three Resource team members, one team member for each of the following: Early years; Headstart to Grade 3, Middle Years; Grade 4 - Grade 8, and High School; Grade 9 - Grade 12. The hi-lights of their support is provided in the school report.

EDUCATION

Student Support Team

The student support team is comprised of a Home School Liaison, Wikhoska Cultural & Guidance Support, Khoska Culture & Guidance Support, Four Elders.

Professional Staff (Teachers)

Our professional staff (Teachers) are comprised of 19 Teachers: Kindergarten - Grade 12.

Early Years: Headstart/Nursery

ECE 11: 2 Instructors

Dakod' lapi Teachers

Early Years: Headstart - Grade 3: 1 Dakod lapi Teacher

Middle Years: Grade 4 - 8: 1 Dakod lapi Teacher

High School: Grade 9 - 12: 1 Dakod lapi Teacher

Education Assistants

There are 20 Classroom Education Assistants from Headstart to Grade 12.

There are 14 Specialized Education Assistants who provide one-one supports for children requiring supports.

Total Education Assistants: 34

Operations & Maintenance Team

Operations & Maintenance: 5

Custodians: 4

EDUCATION

Cooks:

Early Years 1: Breakfast, snacks, Hot Lunch

Middle Years 1 : Snacks, Hot Lunch, Breakfast in classroom

High School, Shared supports: Breakfast, snacks, hot lunch

Transportation

3 SVHS/Provincial Student Buses

5 Tatiyopa Maza Student Buses

1 Heastart/Nursery

2 Casual Drivers

TOTAL: 11

The Administrative Team

Director of Education

Principal: Headstart - 12

Vice Principal: Headstart - 8

Vice Principal: Grades 9 - 12

Facilities:

Headstart - Grade 3

The '24-'25 school year saw the inclusion of Headstart and Nursery with the school programming. We welcome our Wakanyejan who brought our school community the freshness of innocence and pure outlook on life.

To facilitate the accommodation of all our students, the original education building commonly referred to as the "metal building" was re-converted from the former J.P. offices to classrooms for Kindergarten to grade 3. The kindergarten class had an enrolment of 32 students and required double space to accommodate their needs. A total of 5 classrooms were re-installed, 3 bathrooms, a staff room, a copier/work room, half kitchen for preparing snacks, and a full kitchen for preparation of hot meals. Included was an office for the vice Principal and a boardroom for meeting space. A very important component for accommodating our early years students was a Sensory room which was included in the renovations.

EDUCATION

Middle Years

The original TatiopaMaza Wayawa Tipi facility accommodates Headstart/Nursery, Grades 4 - 8, Dakod'lapi room, Resource room, Clinician Room, Principals office and front office, and staff room.

High School

The facility that has been occupied by our high school students is no longer safe for occupancy. With mold and asbestos contamination, and failure to meet accommodation standards, the decision on next steps for our high school students now rests with the governing Council. Students who were attending provincial schools continue to be registered to attend their provincial school, ie. Crocus Plains.

Playground

The grand opening for the new playground for Early years took place on in early May. The playground was constructed to accommodate accessibility for small children and physically challenged children. Although it was hoped that the installation of the new early years playground would be completed prior to snowfall, circumstances beyond our control delayed the installation until spring. Our early years children are now enjoying their new play space.

Transportation

Three new school buses were ordered and purchased for this school year, along with a customized handi-van for our children who require supports for physical challenges. Our children are grateful for their new "wheels".

Moving Forward

It is our hope that the significant strides made with our children with the inclusion of Dakod lapi and Dakod Wicho'han will continue to be supported and uplifted for our children, our young people and as one young student stated "For our Future". Concerted efforts and work are invested in the development of a Dakota Wounspe Education system. All Dakota Oyate Schools will come together to work together to join forces and share what they have developed and share the knowledge of their ancestors. We can do no less in fulfilling our responsibilities as adults responsible for the wellbeing and future of our sacred children.

EDUCATION

Dakod Wicohan

Staff work with our children daily, they are more than Teachers. Our children look to them as Auntie, Uncle, Kungsi, Unkan. They have and are learning their Dakota kinship terms, they join in the singing of our Dakota morning songs, our Dakota prayer. It is the expectation that our children are respectful with each other, helpful and kind. We care for them as our own, they are loved and respected for their uniqueness, their gifts and talents. Everyone is important and every opportunity is taken to uplift and encourage them.

We have heard the concern of our Knowledge Holders and those who have expressed their concern with the loss of our Dakota language and our Dakod Wicohan. It is the foundation for our children's strength, giftedness, self concept and their value as our future. We all are responsible for insuring that our children understand how important they are to our future as Wipazoka Wakpa Dakota Oyate.

All research underscores the value for Children's first language as a significant factor in future success. This we all know without research validating our knowledge.

Tatiyopa Maza School and Sioux Valley High School

Detailed reports for Achievements, Challenges and Progress of Sioux Valley Education and students follow this introductory report.

Financial

Sioux Valley Education does not have a financial office. All finances are under the authority and control of the Sioux Valley Governance office.

Pidaunyapi ye for your continuing support for our children in their education and wellbeing.

EDUCATION

Staff

This report provides an overview of Tatiyopa Mazawayawa Tipi, highlighting its commitment to student well-being, academic excellence, community engagement, and inclusive education within the context of provincial guidelines.

Student body:

Tatiyopa Mazawayawa Tipi currently has a total of 262 students registered. This includes 125 students from HeadStart to grade 3 and 136 students in grades 4 to 8.

Leadership Team:

Our school is led by a dedicated and experienced administrative team, deeply rooted in the community:

- Principal, Rosita Wasicuna-Smoke, is a proud member of the community, bringing over 24 years of experience to her leadership role at Tatiyopa Mazawayawa Tipi. Her journey within the school began as an Educational Assistant. Driven by a passion for education, she pursued and earned both a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts degree. She then dedicated five years as a classroom teacher before furthering her expertise in special education serving four years as a Resource Teacher. Now she is fulfilling the role of Principal, with plans to continue her professional development by pursuing a Master's in Administration.
- Vice-Principal Delonna Pratt is an integral part of the administration team for the 2024-25 school year. As Vice-Principal, she primarily oversees the Early Years (EY's) building, working closely with Head Start/Nursery, Kindergarten, and Grades 1 to 3 classrooms. Mrs. Smoke and Vice-Principal Mrs. Pratt work collaboratively as a team to establish consistency with school policies and procedures, ensuring a smooth and effective school year for all. Vice-Principal Mrs. Pratt expresses her greatest joy in seeing students arrive at school eager to begin their day!

EDUCATION

The school has two administrative assistants:

- Lorna Fitzner, Early Years Administrative Assistant, joined Tatiyopa Mazawayawa Tipi on September 3, 2024. She is Swampy Cree from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Treaty 5. Lorna is a graduate of University College of the North and brings over 30 years experience working in the field of education.
- Dianne Taylor, Elementary Administrative Assistant, serves in the Middle years building. She prepared for her role by completing the Business Skills Certificate Program and the two-year Office Administration Diploma Program at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Manitoba. Dianne has been employed with Sioux Valley Education since 2003, and it has been a pleasure for her to work with the young children in her own community.

Dedicated Staff:

Dakota Language Teachers

- Hello, I am Miles Whitecloud, the current Language & Culture teacher for grades 4-8. I have lived my life in Wipazoka Wakpa and have been an employee with the school for 25 years. 14 years as an E.A and 11 years as a teacher. My partner and I have 5 children, 3 of whom have grown into adulthood, and now we've added in a nephew and niece to make us a tidy 7 children within our Tiwahe. I live by our Dakod Wicohan way and love teaching what I've learned from a life-time of listening to my elders, uncles, and aunts share their knowledge with me. I hope to help our students become Dakota speakers and Dakota thinkers again, as our people's knowledge of life and Unci Maka will help them in their own lives.
- I am Akisha Redsoldier, I am Dakod lapi teacher from Enemy Swim SD. I am 22 years old with 4 years of teaching experience. Our Elders in Sisseton certified that I am a fluent speaker, however I am still a learner, and my hope is to work to attain the knowledge that our Elders and ancestors carried and passed on to us to insure that our sacred Dakod lapi lives on through us and through our children. That is my primary goal in my life and I am grateful to share this knowledge with the children of Wipazoka Wakpa.
- Lisa Taylor Early Years Dakota Language Teacher.

EDUCATION

Nursery/Headstart Program

- Anpetu Waste! My name is Samantha Taylor. I am an ECE II working in the Head Start and Nursery Programs. I have returned to the program after completing 8 years at the Sioux Valley High School as an EA and bus monitor. Previous to that I spent several years originally in the Head Start Program. I have always enjoyed working in education and I am very happy to be back and working with the little ones!
- My name is Claudine Bird. I've been an Early Childhood Educator II for 20 years I love to travel, camp, visit family & friends and dance powwow traditional. The 2024-2025 school year was all new to me being a Headstart/ Nursery Teacher It was challenging but very rewarding. It made me realize I can do anything I put my mind too. I am very grateful to have this new experience in 2024-2025.

Kindergarten Teachers

- My name is Graham Atkinson, I just finished my 9th year teaching in Wipazoka Wakpa. I am a band member of Sandy Bay. I am the oldest of three children and the only son. During the summertime, I can often be found at small town bakeries.
- My name is Crystal Durgan, I am currently one of the Kindergarten teachers. I have been at Sioux Valley School for 15.5 years. I received my Bachelor of Education from Brandon University and am currently pursuing my Masters of Education in the Inclusive Education stream.

Grade1 - 3

- Han! My name is Danette Hawryluk, I am the grade 1 teacher. I have been with Sioux Valley School for 18 years!
- My name is Tammy Yates, I am the Grade 2 teacher, I am a dedicated and caring educator. I ensure all students reach their full potential in an inclusive educational teaching environment. I see students as a gift to teach.
- Anpetu waste! Angie Beaulieu imakiyapi ye! I am the Grade 3 teacher this school year. It has been a pleasure and my honour to be teaching at Sioux Valley School for 15 years and look forward to many more years!

Grade 4 - 8

- Han, Janelle Bone imakiyapi ye. I am a community member and live within the community with my two children Ethan and Elliece and our three dogs Todd, Bernard and Waniyatu. I have lived in the community most of my life and worked in different departments, until I found my passion in teaching and working with children. I am currently employed with Education as the grade 4 teacher, I've been working in the education field for thirteen years seven as an educational assistant and five as a student teacher and three as a classroom teacher. I graduated from Brandon University with a Bachelor of Arts and Education with my focus on early years. I am committed to creating a classroom environment where your child is a valued, trusted, and integral part of our family of learners. I often refer to this quote used in education and in my classroom.

EDUCATION

Maslow before Bloom “If my students aren’t well fed, don’t feel safe, and are badly in need of hugs, they don’t care where my questions land on Bloom’s. We must meet their basic needs FIRST.” I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer!

Grade 5

- Daynon Pratt is a Grade 5 classroom teacher.

Grade 5/6:

- Han Ms. Evans Imakiyapi, I am currently the grade 5/6 teacher at Sioux Valley, marking my fourth year as an educator and my second year in this specific grade role. I have recently applied for my Master of Education Degree in Administration, I have been approved and will be starting this fall. My goal in teaching is integrating Dakota Language into our daily routine in the hopes of preserving our Language.
- Han! Sherisse McKay emakiyapi. Grade 6 onspewicawakiye. I believe Dakota culture and identity play a crucial role in providing a strong educational experience for Dakota children, fostering a sense of belonging, pride and a solid foundation for their future.

Grade 7

- Han! Ms. Essie imakeyapi wayawa tipi ded siseca onspewicawakiya. Waniyetu ota wayawa wicawakiye. Wanna wikcemna sanm napchu ahayan wa ih, wawicawakiya. Dahun wicemna som shakpe hena eeshto wawicawakiya. Pidamaya ye!

Grade 8:

- Ms. Morrisseau is one of the Grade 8 classroom teachers.
- My name is Karli Pollock, I am the grade 8 teacher for Sioux Valley School, and have been for the last seven years. This is my 9th year with Sioux Valley Education.

Physical Education K to grade 8:

- Dean Kachur.

EDUCATION

Resource Team:

- Early Years Resource: My name is Keely Woods. I have been an educator for the past 15 years. I completed my Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degrees at Brandon University. From there, I spent my first years teaching in rural Manitoba where I taught a variety of subjects to multilevel grades. I then was a grade 6 classroom teacher for a significant amount of time as well as counselling support. I have sat on many Educational committees with a particular interest in land-based learning and mental health initiatives. I was most recently Education Director / Post-Secondary for the community of Canupawakpa. This provided me a unique opportunity to understand the importance of indigenizing the curriculum for all learners. I am now the Early Years resource teacher. I can support students and teachers in the classroom and work closely with the clinician team to ensure each child is getting the services they need.
- Middle years Resource: Hello, my name is Lisa Cook, and I am the middle years resource teacher. I currently have 93 children on my caseload, which includes supporting the principals, teachers, educational assistants & clinicians; this looks like whole-class intervention and one-on-one support. I have also implemented programs for reading, spelling, and math support.

Clinical Team Services Headstart to Grade 12:

- Occupational Therapist: Hello, my name is Alexandra Jensen, and I am the Occupational Therapist for the school. I work with students to support their participation in school-based activities by targeting areas such as fine motor skills, sensory processing, attention, and self-care. I currently support 50 students through a combination of individual sessions, small group programming, and classroom collaboration. My role is to help students strengthen the skills they need to fully participate and engage in their learning environment.
- Speech Language Therapist: My name is Rhyann Sawyer, and I'm the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) at our school. I work with students to support a variety of communication disorders, supporting areas such as articulation, language development, fluency (stuttering), social communication, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). I currently provide services to 70 students across different grade levels, providing individualized support based on the students' unique needs. I'm passionate about helping students discover communication methods that are both accessible and meaningful to their everyday lives.
- School Psychologist: Hello, my name is Jessica Finucane and I am the school psychologist for Sioux Valley Schools. In my role, I work to identify students' strengths, understand how they learn most effectively, and determine any barriers to their academic success. I support the students through a combination of consultation, collaboration, intervention and assessment. I am especially passionate about providing culturally relevant psychological services to Indigenous students, ensuring that their unique cultural identities and experiences are respected and reflected in the support they receive.

The schools both have two sensory motor rooms to accommodate students throughout the day.

Support Staff:

- Home liaison: JoAnne Chalmers, My name is Jo- Ann Chalmers. I received my Chef Certificate at Red River College. I worked at the lodge for 28 years as the Head Supervisor. I also cooked at the Daycare for 4 years. I was hired at the school in September 2015 as an EA. Then hired as a Guidance Counsellor in 2016. Since then I have done many roles at the school; driving students' home, cook, receptionist and student support. I received my Serc certificate, First Aid, Thunderbird certificate and Roots of Empathy certificate. I am currently working as the Home and School Liaison driver for the school.

EDUCATION

- Winyan Wicohan- Mrs. Jolene Taylor is a proud mother of 7 and wife to Jason Taylor. Mrs. Taylor is Cree, patrilineal lines to File Hills Agency in Treaty 4 and Dakota, matrilineal lines in Dakota Tipi/Old Sioux Village. Mrs. Taylor is a Full Spectrum Indigenous Birth Worker and currently provides sexual health education and is the Cultural Student Support Worker (Winyan Wichohan) at Sioux Valley Elementary & High School. Mrs Taylor hopes to empower the next generation through land-based teachings and assist the youth for a brighter future.
- IT Manager- "Hau, my name is Carsen Whitecloud Holland and I am the IT Manager for Sioux Valley Education, where I began working in February of this year. Over the past few months since I've started, I've focused on learning our environment and understanding our systems as well as identifying areas for improvement. I've also worked on building relationships with multiple third-party vendors and service providers to assist with our technology needs in the education industry. My initial focus was implementing recommended security baselines and improving our IT infrastructure while listening to staff recommendations and providing assistance where needed. Looking ahead, I plan to continue to fully migrate our infrastructure to the cloud and deploy a proper Student Information System (SIS) to be usable starting this fall. I will also be working on upgrading our technology in the school and completing multiple smaller projects during the summer maintenance period. I look forward to continuing to innovate and improve our efficiency across our systems while fulfilling the technological needs of the school.

Educational Assistants:

The school has 20 educational assistants for Headstart - Grade 8, who support the classroom teachers, are trained in specific programming or work one on one with special need students.

This years Highlights and Key aspects of our Schools: - Dakota/Cultural learning, Dakota Language Keepers (Elders)

As part of the traditional teachings the staff have been planning Equinox feasts, beginning the school year with our seasonal feasts. Fall feast September, Friday September 20th, 2024. Winter Equinox Feast was planned for December 20th, 2024th unfortunately the school was closed due to extreme temperatures. Big wopida to those staff who were able to come out to help with the preparation of the food as well as serve. The school invited community members to come and join our students and staff in enjoying the food. Spring feast was celebrated on March 20th 2025. Summer equinox feast is planned for June 19th 2025.

Our morning exercise/announcements: staff are scheduled and encouraged to complete the morning announcements in Dakota. The Dakota Prayer, greetings, and the date are in shared in the Dakota Language, over the intercom every morning. During the morning announcements, our staff who are singers have been singing the Dakota Flag song. The male singers and students sing the songs in the morning in the "Ho' C'hoka". We invite parents and grandparents to join our morning song and prayers. Encourage your children and grandchildren. Our songs are now led by our young boys, our girls are supporting the singing in our traditional way, our young are saying prayers for their classmates, their school and for our Oyate every morning.

Mr. Whitecloud/Mrs. Chalmers have been smudging the school before students arrive for the day. The staff are involved and very engaged in Dakota Language classes from 3:30 to 4:00 every day.

EDUCATION

Dakota Winter showcase happened on December 17th 2024 at 10am. Staff and students, presented songs, poems and introductions in Dakota Language. Birthday celebrations are shared at the end of each month. Students and staff who have birthdays for the month are asked to join the others in the "Ho' C'hoka". Dakota singers sing happy birthday to the students, and they receive a cupcake once completed.

Dakota Language Bowl: Students and staff participated in the Sioux Valley Dakota Bowl. Two teams of Junior speakers participated in the Dakota Language Bowl at White Cap Saskatchewan.

Hot lunch program has been running since September. Breakfast is also provided to the students everyday. Mid morning and mid-afternoon snacks are provided for the Headstart and Nursery class. Menu's of the hot lunch program is posted on the school Facebook page.

Picture Days: Headstart to grade 8 students had picture day on Friday October 4th, 2024. Picture day was in partnership with our local communication agency. A USB with their child's pictures was sent home for the parents/guardians to make prints.

Professional Development

- August 5 - 23, 2024: All Educational Assistants mandatory Professional Development as Educational Assistants.
- August 30'24: All staff development on the role of Teachers with their classroom Educational Assistants. Educational Assistants on their role, expectations, and responsibilities as EA's in the classroom and with students.
- October 24th & 25th 2024, Livingworks ASIST-suicide prevention training for all staff in both schools. (elders, custodians, maintenance workers, EAs, teachers, administration, and support staff) Sessions were held in Sioux Valley High School in Brandon.
- On May 16th 2025 the staff engaged in planning and a special presentation by the clinical team.
- Classroom teacher team meetings once per month which are focused on numeracy and literacy. These meetings allow teachers to share data and ensure consistency across grades. Talks about assessments, programming, strategies, and share instructional experiences.
- Individual professional development is encouraged.

School Committees:

All staff are encouraged to sign up for school committees that happened through out the year. The school committees meet to plan for activities scheduled on the school calendar and for special activities throughout the school year.

- Halloween Committee organized Trick or Treating around the community in the AM.
- A powwow/kahomani was held in the gym in the afternoon on October 30th 2024.
- FNSO visited the school with treats for all the students.
- Aboriginal Veterans Day/Remembrance day committee planned a service in the morning of Thursday November 7th 2024.
- Meet the teacher day was held on Friday, November 15th 2024 from 9-4.
- Parent/Teacher Conference day planned for Friday November 15th, 9 to 4pm and March 14th, 2025, from 9-4pm.
- On Tuesday, November 19th 2024 Hug-a-Tree and Survive, students participated in a program that helps lost children survive in the woods. It teaches children how not to become lost in the woods, and what to do should they become lost.
- FNSO- Leon Flannigan & K-9 Luke with Brian Fowell and Brian Ogilvie as their assistants.
- I Love to Read Month: February '25. Thank you to our Council member who participated, sharing novels and reading with students.
- Buddy Reading; The older students read with the early years students.
- April 22 and 23rd: Students were rewarded with a movie in Virden and watched the Minecraft movie.
- Mrs. Pollock's grade 8 students had the opportunity to attend the Crocus Plains major production "Percy Jackson Musical" matinee on Friday, March 21.
- Spirit week for grades headstart to grade 8 was on April 14th to 17th 2025.
- Science fair- Friday, April 25th, 2025 involved students from kindergarten to grade 8. Special thanks to the high school students who were our visiting judges.

Before and after school program:

There are currently 21 students who are registered for the program. The program is designed to provide an affordable service to working parents who are needing childcare. The program runs from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. and from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. on regular school days. The structured program is supervised by two staff who provide a wide range of activities.

EDUCATION

After School activities:

This year teaching staff signed up for after school clubs such as;

Ski trip with Mrs. Blahy, Physiotherapist. Students from grade 7 and 8 went to experience Skiing or Snowboarding in Asessippi Ski Area & Resort.

Lego club with Ms. Yates,

UKULELE MUSIC CLUB: Music is the heartbeat of Dakota culture. Ms. Keely Woods.

SELF-CARE CLUB: Medicine Wheel, physical well-being, emotional connection w/peers, personal hygiene, self-esteem boosting. Ms. Ryan Sawyer, Ms. Ali Jansen, and Ms. Jessica Finucane. HOMEWORK club: caring-helping students with their homework. Ms. L. Essie, Girls Club with Ms. Cook and Ms. Taylor.

Safety Procedures: Fire drills, Bus evacuations are planned and practiced every few months. Doorbell entrance/sign in sheets are placed at the reception area for parent and visitors to sign in.

Recess duty schedules: Staff are scheduled to supervise recess duty, based on a 4 day cycle. There are 5 to 6 staff on recess duty every day. New playground for grades K to grade 3 with a separate recess duty schedule on a 4 day cycle with 4 staff on duty everyday.

New picnic tables have been set out in the northeast section of the main school playground.

Transportation:

The elementary school has a total of six buses to provide transportation to the students. Each of the school buses has a bus monitor. Thank you to our school bus drivers for providing safe transportation for our children.

School Renovations:

The former J.P building offices, previously known as the “metal building” which originally housed the junior high students, was reconverted to classrooms to accommodate our Kindergarten to Grade 3 students. Five classrooms were re-established and refurbished, along with a new Sensory room, three bathrooms, a staff room, a galley kitchen for snack preparation and a work room for photocopying and document prep, a full new kitchen, the Vice Principal’s office and a boardroom.

EDUCATION

Kindergarten Classrooms

Grade 1 Classroom

Boardroom

Staff room

With the early years program and students moving to the Early Years facility, there was a major need for our young students to have a new playground close to their facility that would also accommodate children with accessibility needs. The project was planned to be completed in late fall, however circumstances beyond our control saw the delay for completion until after the winter snow melt. The grand opening and ribbon cutting was held in early May. We are grateful for the parents and grandparents attending the grand opening supporting our children.

Tatiyopamaza Wayawa Tipi

The main building of the Tatiyopamaza Wayawa Tipi accommodates the Headstart/Nursery class and the Grades 4 – 8, the Resource Team, Clinician Team, and a new Sensory Room. The lockers that lined the curved hallway were removed by our maintenance team, opening and brightening the space. Lockers were replaced with hooks and boot mats for students.

Outdoor Traditional Knowledge:

Through out the school year, activities that support our traditional Dakota knowledge and our traditional ways of providing and caring for ourselves were shared with students. The activity is shared and more importantly the lessons for why the activity was a traditional Dakota component of our daily lives is taught.

Our hunters joined us and shared Thahca; how to skin and cut up the tado, the various cuts of tado, and prepping of the tado. An outdoor fire was utilized to cook the meat, along with everyone's favorite... frybread.

The Prepping of Mastinca for mastinca stew was shared and a wonderful meal of stew and bannock was had.

The middle years girls with the assistance of our female Dakota Language Keeper learned about corn and the preparation of pasdayapi. - Snow shoeing was introduced and enjoyed by students during their P.E. classes.

Tobogganing and snowboarding was enjoyed by all.

EDUCATION

Archery was shared by our local archery master.

Hanpaphechunpi was a much enjoyed day and was quite competitive.

The early years students had a field trip to Mni Wasteda, learning about the fresh spring water and nature in the area and enjoyed a day of activities.

The meaning of the Walk for MMIWG was shared with students in Grades 6-12 prior to joining in the walk in Wipazoka Wakpa.

Tipsina gathering will once again occur when the plants are ready.

Wipazoka is slow this year. We are hopeful that there will be opportunity to collect berries for our school freezer.

Nina Wopida to our hunters who provided Moose meat for our school freezer. The donation was utilized for solstice feasts.

Also to those who answered our call for contributions of sage for our daily smudging, Nina Wopida.

As the weather continues to warm up, our students will be out and about fishing, setting nets, collecting and learning about the natural medicines and foods that we traditionally have had in our area and in our homes.

The Summer Solstice activities will include tipi set up, Commemoration of the Battle of Big Horn, and a traditional pow-wow to celebrate this great moment in our Dakota history.

Final Note:

SIOUX VALLEY EDUCATION

We respectfully ask that our Oyate members help our school and our children in caring for our facilities, our outdoor equipment and playgrounds and the temporary structures that will be set up. All our efforts are for the benefit of our children. We appreciate your support and your encouragement on behalf of our children and our staff. Pidaunyapi. Mitakue Owasin.

SHIOW VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction:

Shiow Valley High School (SVHS) is proud to present its annual report for the 2024-2025 school year. This report highlights our achievements, challenges, and progress toward our goals. Our mission is to:

1. Provide a student-centered environment that will allow the student to:
 - Experience success and cope with difficulties encountered in life;
 - Develop a positive self-concept;
 - Develop ethical thinking, problem solving, communication, inquiry skills and a desire to learn;
 - Acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits that will make him/her successful in the career path chosen;
 - Become an achieve and contributing member to our community;
 - Achieve, value, and extend their language fluency and Dakota cultural values.
2. Tatiyopa Maza Wayawa Tipi and Wipazoka Wakpa Wayawa Tipi: implements and promotes an intergenerational land-based program that will teach students to respect the Dakota language, teachings, and cultural values through safely participating in hands on activities and observations. Through these teachings our Oyate empowers positive identity; strengthening self- esteem, building relationships, and instilling pride in Dakota wichoni. Therefore, strengthening and facilitating connections to each other and Unchi Maka.
3. Deliver and implement effective teaching practices in the delivery of the Manitoba curriculum.
4. Involve parents and integra ng the school community and family in the education of the students.

Our staff was committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Our team includes:

- Seven certified teachers with expertise in various subjects, including resource and guidance counsellor
- Support staff; educational assistants, a technologist, an administrative assistant, a school elder (Kunshi), custodial, maintenance, clinicians and contracted mental health therapists
- One school administrator

Our teachers are experts in their fields, and our support staff provide invaluable assistance to students and staff alike. We welcomed Mrs. Deborah Asidao (principal) and Ms. Lisa Whitecloud (classroom teacher and guidance counsellor) and now bid farewell to Miss Shayla Bell, educational assistant, Mrs. Corinne Pratt-Harper (vice-principal/guidance counsellor), Mrs. Jewel Sundell (classroom teacher) and Mrs. Deborah Asidao (principal).

We also welcomed Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College student-teachers and counsellors; Aidan MacIsaac, Halimat Abdusalam, Dayle Blacksmith and Brianna Richard, were mentored and supervised by our certified teachers for a 3-month period.

SIOUX VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Year in Review

The 2024-2025 school year was marked by significant achievements and milestones.

- SVHS implemented a new after-school activities program that runs from October until the end of the school year. It incorporates the Dakota culture in various aspects, as well as academics, along with healthy snacks.
- SVHS provided a nutritious breakfast and lunch for all students at no cost courtesy of the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba and Dakota Tiwahe Services.
- Students with perfect or excellent attendance were recognized and celebrated with monthly awards.
- Sioux Valley Teen Clinic, in cooperation with Sioux Valley Health Centre and the Brandon Satellite Program/Max Rady College of Medicine/Rady Faculty of Health Sciences/University of Manitoba/Site Lead/Brandon Family Medicine Residency Stream/Department of Family Medicine, continued monthly for our students to access. This helped to strengthen our community partnerships.
- Mental health therapists and an art therapist have been to the high school on a weekly basis to counsel and assist students who suffer from mental health issues.
- School clinicians have assisted with the assessment of our students who have been referred to them by our teachers. These include an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, physio therapist and a school psychologist. SVHS hosted multiple presentations that included: a Drug/Alcohol/Weapons presentation by Brandon City Police; MADD presentation by MADD Canada; Human Trafficking presentation by Dakota Tiwahe Services; Career Day with a variety of vendors; Live Different 2-day workshop by Live Different Company; Life Skills, Financial Literacy and Cyber Security presentation by Tegare.
- School-wide year-end field trip to Winnipeg; Human Rights Museum, Royal Canadian Mint, Escape Social and Old Spaghe Factory.
- After-School Program Showcase.
- Staff and students worked with H&CO Academy to expose our students to possible future career opportunities. This is an extension to the after-school activity for girl's glam and boy's health and hygiene.
- High school course: Drama 1A 20S worked with Brandon University professors Westman
- Centennial Auditorium staff in introducing students to the world of drama.
- Dakota culture implementation and student participation:
 - Dakota language instruction (grades 9-12 and staff)
 - Moccasin games and making of moccasin mat and sticks
 - Pow wow singing and drumming
 - Beading lanyards and earrings
 - Hosted Dakota speakers who shared the Dakota culture and spirituality with our students.

SHIOW VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

- Staff and students participated in the Dakota Language Bowl
- Ribbon skirt and ribbon shirt making
- Tipi building
- Moccasin making
- Truth and Reconciliation group accompanied students to the former residential school grounds and shared with students the reason why every child matters.
- Solstice feasts, Kahomnis and give-aways
- Flag song and daily morning prayer
- Little Big Horn Battle reenactment
- Tiwahe Youth Conference
- Indigenous artwork
- Dakota integration into curriculum
- Smudging
- Traditional health classes
- Jr. Chief attended the Assembly of First Nations Conference in Ottawa, ON
- The high school course "History of Shiox Valley" has cultural components throughout, storytelling, Dakota language, SV elder speakers on video, artistic expressions .
- All staff and students participated in the MMIW walk to honour our missing and murdered Indigenous people
- High school course - "Canada in the Contemporary World" incorporated Orange Shirt Day with the late SV Elder Topahdewin, The Gladys Cook Story & visit to Brandon Residential School - visiting with elders, hand-on drone demo, land based history lesson. Lessons by Elder on traditional Peacekeeping & governance. They created cultural expressions of their own flags
- High school course "Career Development/Life Work Planning" incorporated Dakota Identity & self expression through Vision Board.
- High school course "Current Topics in FNMI" looked at Indigenous cultures throughout Canada and their relationships to land, languages, cosmology, and value systems. Cosmology includes the seasonal activities which incorporates our Solstice Feasts, powwow, round dances, elder prayers, honoring songs, & gift giving.
- High school course "History of Canada": Dakota territory & development of Canada
- High school course "Geographical Issues": Traditional Dakota territory mapping, cosmology/ star maps & seasonal movements/ seasonal rounds. Land/ Unci Maka -Grandmother Earth, Air/ Woniya - Breath of Life; Fire / Wi -the Sun. 4 Directions/Tate Topa - & Hochoka, ceremonial center/standing in the center. Knowing your place on the earth. Land to Table Foods - traditional harvesting

SIOUX VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

- High school course "Visual Arts": Dakota design, floral designs, geometric designs, Tipi making & understanding the value of the home, traditional art & design, how do we make it our home? Understanding tipi in relation to 4 directions, birthing, Tiwahe/family, Tiospaye/ kinship network, Oyate/ the Nation, and Oceti Sakowin/ Seven Campfires of the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota.
- High school course "Global Issues: citizenship & Sustainability": Mitakuye Owasin - We are All Related. Social Justice in relationship to Dakota values, humility, compassion, bravery, fortitude, generosity, wisdom, respect, honor, perseverance, love, sacrifice, and truth. Social justice in relation to identity & gender. Citizenship in relation to community. Sustainability in relation to the health of Unci Maka - Grandmother Earth and future generations/ 7 Generation Thinking
- Items in the cultural classrooms are used to demonstrate *knowledge about the four medicines, tobacco/red willow, sage, cedar, sweetgrass: Daily Smudging
- Star knowledge & ancestral knowledge
- Dakota Virtues of respect, honor, generosity, love, humility, compassion, strength, bravery, fortitude, wisdom, truth, & perseverance
- Food Sovereignty- harvesting traditional foods, corn, bison, berries, wild mint, wild rice, & maple syrup.
- Honoring of relatives passed-on

Priorities: our priorities for the year included:

- Implementing the Dakota culture and language into daily school culture
- Improving student academic achievement
- Enhancing student well-being and mental health support
- Fostering a sense of community and belonging

Actions: to achieve our priorities, we:

- Implemented new instructional strategies which include curriculum-based academics/resources and Dakota culture-based activities.
- Implemented a specific attendance policy
- Provided professional development opportunities for staff in suicide prevention strategies, first aid, safe food handling, and team building and collaboration. Maintenance, custodian and administration were trained in school maintenance by Safety Services Manitoba.
- Strengthened our counseling and support services
- Weekly Dakota language classes for staff and students
- Grade 12 students participated in writing the grade 12 provincial English and Math exams

SIoux VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Outcomes, our efforts led to:

- Improved student academic performance
- Improved staff/student Dakota cultural knowledge and performance
- Increased student attendance, engagement and motivation
- Enhanced staff collaboration and support

Student Outcomes, our students achieved:

- Academic achievements: improved graduation rates, increased academic performance scores
- Extracurricular achievements: sports teams-volleyball, basketball, badminton, golf, beach volleyball and hiking and after-school clubs

Student Participation and Accountability, we encourage student participation and accountability through:

- Student leadership opportunities: Jr. Chief and Council nominated and elected by their peers
- Regular progress monitoring and feedback

Highlights from the year include:

- School events: Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer Solstice feasts and Kahomnis, school wide field trip to Winnipeg, After-School Programming and Showcase, Grade 12 Graduation.

In conclusion, the 2024-2025 school year was a success, with many achievements and milestones to celebrate. We're proud of our students, staff, and community for their hard work and dedication. We look forward to building on our successes and addressing challenges in the upcoming year.

Report prepared by SVHS Administrator; Mrs. Deborah Asidao

MATURE GRADE 12 PROGRAM

Staff:

- Mr. Michael Wasicuna, B.A-B.Ed, Instructor
- Miss Carmelle McCreary – Pratt, Education Assistant
-

Introduction:

As a former graduate from the Mature 12 Program offered in 2005-2006 school year from Assiniboine Community College, I put my heart and soul into educating the students this year. It has always been a dream of mine to graduate and become a teacher specifically in adult education.

This year we are projected to have the largest graduation class from any adult education program offered here in our community. This is an awesome opportunity for our students and community to celebrate as it proves the drive and determination our members possess in wanting to reach the next level in their lives.

Activities/Accomplishments:

This year we have a total of 22 students who had expressed interest in the program. Our program enrolls all students at the start of the year who require ALL (8) eight credits to graduate beginning in September and running until June. With each student having a different learning plan, some students who have earned credits before entering our program can use those credits to go toward the mature 12 certification we offer. With that said some students with more credits may start later in the school year depending upon which credits are required for graduation.

This year we have approximately 17 students in total projected to graduate in June 2025. With (8) eight students requiring only academic courses to graduate and (8) eight other students requiring both academic and an additional volunteer hours course to graduate. (1) one lone student required only a single Math 40s credit to finish her mature 12 journey.

We had approximately (5) five students who withdrew voluntarily due to personal problems, mental health issues, addiction/treatment opportunities and/or personal problems related to attendance.

With our classroom doubling as both, court room and the classroom, this double booking often left our students without a learning environment. We would find an alternative classroom at the Veteran's Hall. On these days we would schedule certifications and workshops that would be beneficial for our students and for their pathways after our program concludes. Some of the workshops and training we have offered are safe food handling, CPR first aid, lateral violence/kindness, Addictions and Alcohol workshops to name a few.

MATURE GRADE 12 PROGRAM

I have taught all levels of students from subbing for Kindergarten to Grade 12 ELA courses one thing I have learned is that students always have an excuse for not attending classes. There is no shortage of excuses for adult education, and it has been proven when we have studied "Andragogy" (adult learning).

I look forward to continuing and assisting our community members who are seeking to turn that next page in their lives leading toward a better educated future.

I have had a fun filled experience in working with Diana Roulette and Carmelle McCreary-Pratt. My own education journey has led full circle from when I began my education journey in 2005-06 as a Mature 12 student. I have always encouraged our youth and our students to pursue a higher education than what you believe you can achieve. Reach for the stars and before you know it you may not have reached them but when you look around, you're already in the sky in the clouds.

— SIOUX VALLEY DAKOTA NATION —



POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Staff

- Diana Roulette, Program Manager
Phone: (204) 855-2671
Cell: (204) 512-0856
Email address: Post.secondary@svdngovernance.com
- Jaci Branth, Administrative Assistant
Phone: (204) 855-2671
Cell: (204) 512-0853
Email address: Employment.training@svdngovernance.com
- Tanya Wanbdiska,
Employment & Development Coordinator
Phone: (204) 855-2671
Cell: (204) 441-7400
Email: tanya.wanbdiska@svdngovernance.com
- Colleen Hall
Student Support Worker
Cell: (204) 740-7706
Email: colleen.hall@svdngovernance.com

Our current location is on the second floor of the Governance Building. By mid-June all Post Secondary/E & T Staff will be relocated to the Wichozani to have all services under one roof.

We are available during regular office hours, Monday to Friday.

Post Secondary Education

Our commitment is to our members, both on and off reserve, to strengthen and promote educational opportunities for SVDN. A list of graduates has been included for this year.

Currently an issue that has arisen is the need for literacy programming and upgrading. But due to lack of training space, we are not able to address this issue in the community.

Closing Dates for Sponsorship Applications:

- Fall (September – December)..... June 30th
- Winter (January – April)November 15th
- Spring – Summer (May-August)..... March 15th

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Employment and Training

Our purpose is to lead in the development of a skilled Indigenous workforce that empowers the clients of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

At present we are working to provide training in the community to alleviate the hardships of moving to Brandon for short periods of time.

Currently, one of our key issues that has been outstanding throughout the years is the need for a training center, that would be suitable to house more community training.

The proposed training center would need to include:

- Two to three classrooms equipped with the latest technology
- Full computer lab, to train in various computer programs such as office suite and access to online programming.

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Completed Training:

- Drivers Education
- Computer Basics Training
- Mini Trades
 - ◇ Drywall, painting and interior finishing
- Employability & Life Skills Training
 - ◇ Criminal Record Checks, Child Abuse Checks, Vulnerable Person Checks
 - ◇ Resume Building
 - ◇ Customer Service
 - ◇ Managing Stress Program
 - ◇ Mind Mapping
 - ◇ Drivers Education
 - ◇ Standard CPR/First Aid
 - ◇ Budgeting Workshop
 - ◇ WHMIS
 - ◇ Cultural Programming
- ◇ Food Safe
- ◇ Anger Management
- ◇ Building Healthy Relationships
- ◇ Speaking to the Skill - part 1 and 2
- ◇ Mental Health Programming
- ◇ Lateral Violence
- ◇ Work Ethics
- ◇ Confined Space Entry and Rescue
- ◇ Small Business Management
- ◇ H2S Alive
- ◇ Industrial Fall Protection
- Speaker Training
- Suicide Prevention Workshop – Walk with Me
- Security Training
- Heavy Equipment Operator

Upcoming:

- Butcher Training
- Chainsaw / Brushsaw Safety
- FNSO Training
- IWE Woman's Workshop
- Employability and Life Skills
- Pest Control
- Student Summer Employment

To be posted:

- Lawn Cutting Crew (4)
- Casual Workers (when requested)
- Garden Crew (4)
- Maintenance Crew (4)

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Post Secondary Graduates 2024-2025

- Abdizamani Tacan,
Mature High School Diploma,
Assiniboine College
- Taza Pratt,
Bachelor of Environmental Design
University of Manitoba
- Julia Leach ,
Master of Arts,
University of Manitoba
- Kristen Pratt,
Bachelor of Nursing,
University of Manitoba
- Leland Esquash,
Mature High School Diploma,
Seven Oaks Adult Learning Center
- Cheyenne Whitecloud,
FN HR Management Diploma,
Yellowquill University College
- Tia Smoke,
FN HR Management Diploma,
Yellowquill University College
- Robin Mousseau,
Practical Nursing,
Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Eva Tymchak (Grey),
Bachelor of Science,
University of Regina
- Darris Wacanta- Halfe,
Indigenous BSW,
Blue Quill University
- Conner Hockley,
Business Administration,
Lethbridge Polytechnic
- Michael Mc Anally,
Bachelor of Ed / Native Studies
University of Alberta
- Jackson Jacques,
Motive Power Technician,
Sault College
- Olivia Thomas,
Bachelor of Arts,
Vancouver Island University
- Melissa Hotain,
Certified Aboriginal Prof. Admin.
AFOA
- Evelyn Pratt,
Health Managers Designation
- Autumn McKay,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Desiree Wacanta,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

- Joseph Tacan ,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Dolten Bell,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Mazlin Bell, Mature
High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Danielle Bennett,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Denny Pratt,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Darryl Hapa,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Dorian Tacan Waste,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Rhiannon Kennedy,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Fredrick Paul,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Jason McKay,
Mature High School Diploma
Yellowquill College University
- Adrianna Blacksmith,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Tristen McKay,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Trevlyn Blacksmith,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Arianna Crowe,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Branden McKay,
Mature High School Diploma,
Yellowquill College University
- Dryden Wanbdiska,
Heavy Equipment Operator,
SWS Training and Consultin

— SIOUX VALLEY DAKOTA NATION —



Introduction:

The Sioux Valley Health Centre (SVHC) proudly serves as the cornerstone of health and wellness for Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN), delivering accessible, culturally informed, and holistic healthcare services to community members across all ages and stages of life. Located in the heart of Sioux Valley, SVHC continues to uphold its mission of fostering a healthy, empowered, and resilient community through compassionate care, preventative health initiatives, and collaborative partnerships.

Over the past year, SVHC has made significant strides in expanding and enhancing its service offerings, infrastructure, and outreach. From new renovations that have modernized our facilities, to an increase in specialized health programs targeting chronic disease, mental wellness, and substance use, 2024–2025 has been a period of transformation and growth. At the core of this progress lies a deep respect for Dakota culture, traditions, and values—elements that are thoughtfully woven into every aspect of the care we provide.

The Centre's work has been guided by a commitment to both medical excellence and cultural relevance. Through partnerships with federal and provincial health bodies, local organizations, and Indigenous health networks, SVHC has been able to amplify its reach and improve health outcomes for the SVDN community. This year saw a vibrant calendar of events and workshops—from youth-centered wellness fairs to elder-focused programming and addiction awareness campaigns—all designed to engage the community and support their journey toward better health.

As we reflect on the year's achievements and challenges, this annual report highlights the scope and impact of our programs, celebrates the events that brought us together, and outlines our strategic vision for the future. The Sioux Valley Health Centre remains steadfast in its role as a trusted health partner, advocate, and ally—continuing to walk alongside our community on the path to holistic wellness.

Health Programs and Services:

At the heart of the Sioux Valley Health Centre is a comprehensive array of programs designed to support the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the SVDN community. Guided by the principles of accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and respect for traditional healing practices, our services aim to provide holistic care that meets the evolving needs of our people.

Primary and Preventative Care

SVHC remains a frontline provider of essential medical services, offering daily nursing care, immunizations, chronic disease management, foot care, and prenatal/postnatal support. These services not only address immediate health concerns but also emphasize the importance of early intervention and wellness education.

HEALTH

Mental Health and Addictions Services

Recognizing the urgent need for mental health and addictions support, SVHC has continued to expand its programming in this area. Licensed counselors and support workers offer confidential one-on-one sessions, family counseling, and culturally grounded therapy. In partnership with Indigenous Services Canada, we have also expanded our services to include off-reserve counselling services to those in need. The Centre also partners with spiritual leaders and Elders to integrate traditional teachings into healing journeys.

Home and Community Care

For our elders and those living with disabilities, our Home and Community Care program ensures compassionate in-home support. From meal preparation and bathing assistance to transportation and medical follow-ups, our dedicated team works tirelessly to allow clients to live with dignity and independence.

Dental and Allied Health Services

With a full-time dental therapist and rotating visits from specialized care providers, SVHC supports a broad spectrum of health needs. These services are critical to early detection, treatment, and education—especially for our youth and elder populations.

Medical Transportation

Ensuring that no member of our community is left behind due to geographic barriers, the SVHC Medical Transportation program offers reliable, coordinated travel to medical appointments both within and outside the region. This service is a lifeline for many, bridging the gap between remote living and quality care. As a gentle reminder, specialist appointment requires advanced notification – please ensure timely communication with staff in order to properly prepare for these appointments out of community.

Key Events and Community Engagement

Community connection is at the core of the Sioux Valley Health Centre's mission. Throughout 2024–2025, SVHC hosted a diverse series of events designed to educate, empower, and uplift our people. These events reflect our belief that true health is rooted in community—nurtured through knowledge, shared experiences, and cultural continuity.

Health Promotion and Education Events

Get Better Together – Chronic Disease Management Series (January–March 2025)

In this empowering six-week series, community members came together to learn tools for managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis. The program combined group discussions, goal setting, culturally relevant resources, and self-care strategies to promote resilience and independence.

Come & Go Healthy Together Sessions (April 2025)

These inclusive, open-door events brought people into the Centre for informal engagement with healthcare professionals over a shared meal. Sessions included health screenings, interactive demonstrations, and resource sharing in a warm, community-driven environment.



HEALTH

Preschool Wellness Fair (May 2024)

In partnership with local health practitioners and school staff, SVHC hosted a vibrant wellness fair tailored to families with children aged 3 to 5. Activities included vision and hearing checks, developmental screenings, and nutrition education—all geared toward supporting early childhood health and school readiness.

Mental Health and Addictions Awareness

National Addictions Awareness Week (November 2024)

Under the banner of hope and recovery, SVHC coordinated a week-long series of awareness campaigns, community talks, and creative contests. Centered around the theme of connection and healing, the initiative engaged youth, adults, and Elders in meaningful conversations about prevention, support, and breaking the stigma of substance use.

Afternoon of Fun – Addictions Services Engagement (April 2024)

To foster positive experiences for those navigating recovery, the Addictions Services team hosted an afternoon of games, prizes, and laughter. These lighthearted gatherings build trust and strengthen social bonds—vital components of long-term wellness.

Wahoda Wozani Summer Day Program (July–August 2024)

Launched as a culturally rooted summer initiative, this six-week daytime program supported individuals affected by alcohol or substance use. Participants explored traditional teachings, engaged in therapeutic activities, and received guidance from Elders and trained addiction workers in a safe, stigma-free space.

Cultural and Spiritual Gatherings

Mourner's Feast (January 2025)

Held in sacred remembrance of community members who have passed, the Mourner's Feast offered spiritual nourishment and collective healing. It was a time for reflection, ceremony, and honoring those who have journeyed on—strengthening community ties across generations.



New Year's Dry Social & Moccasin Games (December 2024)

These alcohol-free holiday events provided festive alternatives for community celebration. With traditional moccasin games, card tournaments, music, and shared meals, the gatherings reflected SVHC's commitment to creating spaces of joy, safety, and cultural pride.

Jordan's Principle Program Highlight – Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

In 2024-2025, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation continued to advance its commitment to the well-being of our children through the ongoing success of the Jordan's Principle Program. This vital initiative ensures that all First Nations children have equitable access to the health, social, and educational services they need, when they need them, without delays caused by jurisdictional disputes.

The program has seen increased engagement from families and service providers alike, with significant improvements in case management and timely access to culturally appropriate supports. Our dedicated staff continue to advocate for and support our children in navigating the health and education systems, while also coordinating essential therapeutic and developmental services.

HEALTH

New Facility Construction

A major milestone this year is the construction of a new Jordan's Principle facility located on the east end of the Sioux Valley Health Centre. This purpose-built space is designed to serve as a central hub for program operations, offering expanded capacity for therapy rooms, family consultations, and administrative offices. Once complete, it will greatly enhance our ability to deliver comprehensive, child-focused services directly within the community.

This development represents a significant step forward in creating a welcoming, supportive environment for our children and their families, grounded in the values and traditions of the Dakota Nation.

Facility Developments and Strategic Initiatives

As the needs of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation continue to evolve, so too does the Sioux Valley Health Centre's vision for the future. The 2024–2025 fiscal year was marked by strategic investments in infrastructure and long-term planning—investments made not just in bricks and mortar, but in the future health and sustainability of our community.

Infrastructure Enhancements

This year, SVHC undertook a series of major renovations aimed at modernizing the health facility while maintaining its warm, welcoming environment. These upgrades include:

- **Mechanical Systems Overhaul:** The replacement and modernization of outdated systems has improved heating, ventilation, and overall energy efficiency—ensuring a comfortable environment for patients and staff, year-round.
- **Clinical Space Reconfiguration:** Several offices and treatment rooms were restructured to support more seamless service delivery, including dedicated spaces for confidential counseling, maternal care, and traditional healing consultations.
- **Accessibility Improvements:** Recognizing the importance of equitable access for all, SVHC enhanced its entrances, walkways, and waiting areas to better accommodate Elders and individuals with mobility challenges.

These physical improvements reflect SVHC's ongoing effort to create a space that is safe, inclusive, and reflective of Dakota values.

Strategic Visioning and Planning

Beyond immediate facility needs, SVHC has laid the groundwork for sustainable growth and innovation:

- **Expansion of Mental Health Services:** With rising community demand, planning has begun to increase mental health staffing, including access to culturally trained therapists, youth-focused programs, and crisis support.
- **Integrated Care Model Development:** SVHC is working toward a more integrated model of care that combines Western medical practices with traditional Dakota healing. This includes partnerships with local Knowledge Keepers, the inclusion of smudging areas, and increased community engagement in program design.
- **Digital Health Access:** Strategic planning is underway to explore the implementation of digital tools, such as secure patient portals and telehealth services, to improve appointment accessibility and streamline health information sharing—especially for those in remote areas.
- **Youth and Elder Engagement Framework:** In recognition of the wisdom of our Elders and the promise of our youth, SVHC has begun consulting with both groups to inform program development. Their voices will shape future initiatives in mental health, education, and community wellness.
-

Second Harvest Partnership

Our ongoing partnership with Second Harvest continues to thrive! In the past year, we have successfully delivered both on and off- reserve a total sum of 1,511,590 pounds of produce, breads, vegetables and meats. A special thank you to this vital organization in its commitment to assisting our Nation and an appreciation for the strong backs of our workforce!

HEALTH

Looking Ahead: Goals for 2025–2026

As we look to the future, the Sioux Valley Health Centre remains guided by the principles of respect, unity, and responsibility. Our vision for 2025–2026 is rooted in a commitment to continuous improvement, culturally grounded care, and strong community partnerships. The path ahead will bring new opportunities to deepen our impact, respond to emerging health needs, and uplift the physical, mental, and spiritual wellness of our people.

1. Expanding Mental Wellness and Addictions Services

The demand for mental health and addictions support continues to grow, and SVHC is responding with both urgency and compassion. In the coming year, we aim to:

- Recruit additional Indigenous mental health professionals and peer support workers.
- Develop a mobile mental health outreach team to serve at-risk individuals in their homes.
- Introduce culturally specific recovery circles and trauma-informed care training for all staff.
- Partner with local schools to implement youth-focused mental health literacy programs.

2. Strengthening Traditional Healing Integration

In 2025–2026, SVHC will continue to honour Dakota traditions by embedding cultural practices across all services. Our goals include:

- Establishing a dedicated Traditional Healing Room for ceremony and spiritual care.
- Hosting regular teachings and seasonal ceremonies led by Knowledge Keepers.
- Offering land-based healing programs that connect individuals to culture, identity, and nature.
- Expanding collaboration with Elders to ensure all services are delivered in a culturally respectful manner.

3. Enhancing Access Through Technology

Accessibility remains a top priority—especially for community members in rural areas or those with mobility challenges. Upcoming initiatives include:

- Launching a secure Telehealth platform for medical and mental health appointments.
- Developing a centralized health record system to improve continuity of care.
- Training community health representatives in digital tools to assist Elders and those without internet access.

4. Fostering Community Wellness Through Prevention

True health begins with prevention. In the year ahead, SVHC will expand its wellness outreach by:

- Increasing health promotion campaigns on topics such as nutrition, diabetes prevention, and physical activity and screening initiatives.
- Introducing community walking groups, wellness challenges, and seasonal health fairs.
- Collaborating with local schools to integrate health education into curricula.
- Supporting family wellness through parenting workshops, prenatal circles, and Elder-youth mentorship programs.

5. Building Organizational Strength

Behind every strong program is a strong team. SVHC will invest in its people and infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability by:

- Providing ongoing professional development in culturally safe care, trauma response, and Indigenous public health.
- Securing funding to recruit new staff and enhance current roles.
- Exploring new partnerships with regional health authorities, academic institutions, and First Nations health organizations.
- Strengthening data collection and evaluation processes to track outcomes and inform future planning.

A Shared Path Forward

As we embark on another year of service, we recognize that our strength lies in our unity. The journey to health is not a solitary one—it is a shared path, walked together with respect for our ancestors and hope for the generations yet to come.

The Sioux Valley Health Centre remains deeply honoured to walk this path with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation community. Together, we will continue to grow, to heal, and to thrive.

OYATE CHISTINAPIDA DAYCARE

Staff:

- Sadie Harrop, Director, ECE II
- Jaqueline Ross- Demas, Administrative Assistant, ECE II
- Leona Tacan, Staff Supervisor ECE II
- Melissa Bone, Cook
- Maureen Tacan , Cleaner
- Tyson Wasteste, Maintenance
- Brandy Koch, ECE II
- Brady Hotain, Child Care Assistant
- Caitlin Elk , ECE II (in training)
- Hilana Boyer, CCA (in training)
- Jocelyn Bunn , ECE II (in training)
- Autumnne Sinclair, Child Development worker, ECE II (in training)
- Caitlin Mini, Child Development worker
- Lauren Hotain, Child Care Assistant
- Autumn McKay, CCA (in training)
-

Introduction:

Here, at Oyate Chistinapida Daycare we provide childcare for children from the ages of three months to six years. We are a thriving facility at maximum capacity. We open at 8:00 am with a closure time at 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. We provide three meals a day provided by our own personal experienced chef. We will always try to foster the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of every child.

OYATE CHISTINAPIDA DAYCARE

Key issues/challenges:

Our main challenge at the daycare is the facility itself. Although, we have a decent sized space, the building was not built to accommodate a daycare. We utilize the space we have in a way that works, but our goal is to have a new facility built made for the needs of all children. We would like to obtain a larger facility to accommodate more families who require the urgent necessity of childcare. This will help eliminate the wait list.

Activities and Accomplishments:

We have 3 staff members currently enrolled in the Workplace Program training to be Early Childhood Educators. We have an additional 3 staff members obtaining their grade 12 and another 2 staff members in Winnipeg obtaining their Child Care Assistance certificate.

There is a lot of training opportunities available for the Oyate Chistinapida staff, and we encourage all staff to be trained, so we can provide the best quality care for the children. A new play structure and play equipment purchase is underway. The daycare is working endlessly to obtain a licence by meeting standards and requirements to uphold a licence for a non-profit organisation soon.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IMPLEMENTATION DEPARTMENT (IRID)

Staff:

- Adrian Ironman, Self Government Facilitator
- Amanda Ledoux, Records Technician
- Daniza De Paola, Communications Specialist
- Lily Blue, Process Officer
- Nick Pompana, Process Officer
- Nicole Ironman, Administrative Assistant

Introduction:

The team was tasked with working on the following areas: the (TRC) Tiospaye Representatives Council, Community Safety Law, Gaming & Recreation Law, and the Children and Families Law.

Key Issues/Challenges:

The IRID Team was established in September/October 2024 and tasked with creating and implementing the Tiospaye Representatives Council (TRC), review of previous laws and the proposed new law.

On the Tiospaye Representatives Council, we had some of opposition, concerns about the structure and who should sit on the TRC. We tried to break it down to age group demographics, ie. 18 – 34 years, 35 – 54 years and 55+ years (Elders). We could not appease community members, so we, opted for a different approach. Everyone over the age of 18 yrs. are now the INTERIM TRC, it will be their duty to choose a PERMANENT TRC member. The TRC member size will be determined by the Interim TRC. Our team will continue to work on the TRC.





The Community Safety Law and the Gaming & Recreation Law were already passed; and focus turned to the proposed Children and Families Law. We started to engage with our community members on and off the Reserve, our information sessions started in March (4 sessions), April (6 sessions) and May (6 sessions).

In May we had (3) three readings on and off the reserve for the proposed Children and Families Law Vote on May 27/25 in Winnipeg, May 28, 2025 in Brandon, and May 30, 2025 in Sioux Valley.

The proposed Children and Families Law did not pass, the results are:

No – 176

Yes – 71

We tried our best to inform the Sioux Valley Dakota Oyate membership, we are new and inexperienced at this process. Some errors were made, like the signs....it should have said "come vote." But it said, "Vote YES," it was never our intention to make community members feel that we were imposing your right to vote "yes or no." For that we would like to apologize.

Activities and Accomplishments:

The IRID team worked well together, we accomplished our goals and feel that we did our jobs to the best of our ability. Though we found it stressful at times, we set out to inform our community members about the TRC and the Children and Families Law, by way of Information Sessions and delivering Information packages to every household within Sioux Valley boundaries. The IRID team feel that we accomplished what we set out to do.

FIRST NATION SAFETY OFFICERS

Highlighting the significant accomplishments of the Sioux Valley First Nation Safety Officers for 2024 and thus far in 2025.

In 2024, the Safety Officers demonstrated a strong commitment to Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) training, collaborating with some of the best search and rescue teams in Manitoba. As a result of this dedication, Sioux Valley Safety Officers are now recognized as a valuable resource and are among the officers called upon in the event of a missing person in Manitoba.

Continuing their commitment to the community, 2025 saw several officers undertake training to obtain certifications in mental health and well-being. This crucial training equips our officers to better support individuals experiencing suicidal ideation or mental health crises.

Furthermore, 2025 marks a significant step forward with the adoption of MRF software. Sioux Valley Safety Officers are the first safety officers in Manitoba to utilize this technology, which allows them to access and verify licenses, registrations, and warrants, as well as securely store vital information related to calls and traffic incidents. We are also proud to be the first to acquire a laser speed radar, a valuable tool in promoting safety and enforcing speed limits within the community and on the connecting highway.

The impact of these advancements is evident in the statistics. Comparing data from 2022 and 2023 to 2024 and the current period in 2025, we have observed a notable decrease in the crime rate and reduced drug availability. This progress is a direct result of our officers' dedicated work alongside the RCMP to build strong cases, secure warrants, and achieve higher conviction rates, marking a significant improvement over past programs. We have received positive feedback from Manitoba Justice regarding our performance, and Sioux Valley is recognized as a leader among FNSOs and other communities due to our ongoing training and unwavering commitment to the program.



FIRST NATION SAFETY OFFICERS



We are on track to have all officers achieve Level Two certification by the end of 2025. Additionally, we are pleased to welcome two new recruits who will be attending the next training course, bringing our total number of officers to twelve. Our FNSO team currently consists of nine officers who provide 24/7 coverage. Despite often facing challenging and negative situations, the Sioux Valley Justice Coordinator continuously seeks opportunities for enhanced training to ensure our skills remain at the highest level and our program operates effectively. The Justice Coordinator also maintains strong working relationships with Manitoba Justice, the RCMP, Brandon Police Service, Division D, and the Crown Attorneys of Manitoba Justice.

Looking ahead, we aim for all officers to become EMR trained in 2025-2026, with the aspiration of acquiring our own medical emergency equipment. Additionally, our officers with advanced drone piloting skills are planning to work towards acquiring a larger drone this year, with the support of Lands. Our drone pilots undergo extensive training and flight hours and take their responsibilities seriously, providing valuable assistance to our program and the RCMP in search operations when needed.

These accomplishments underscore the dedication and hard work of the Sioux Valley First Nation Safety Officers and the positive impact they are having on the safety and well-being of our community.

To quote our Manitoba Justice director of FNSO and policing “ Sioux Valley has established a well-structured and respected FNSO program that continues to serve as a strong example for other Nations. Officer Helena Mazawasicuna experience in operational planning, equipment outfitting, and community-based safety strategies is widely recognized.

Please dial 911 with any criminal or medical emergency.

FFNSO emergency line is 204-512-0858

— SIOUX VALLEY DAKOTA NATION —



LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Staff:

- Adam C. Subject Lands Director & Economic Development

Introduction:

Here in the lands department, it is always an honour to serve the SVDN community and bring a balance of both community engagement sessions and community development and strategic planning, (done by promoting on the land fun youth events and activities designed for all ages and inclusion). These events can be fun, and other times work oriented, but always designed to allow the community to gather and communicate and have safe fun talks.

By equipping these community events with educational components like historic Dakota legends and tradition and enriching these events with teachings on current land issues as well as communicating challenges and opportunities for the future, we allow for dynamic and community driven planning that addresses the growing concerns and needs of the Oyate.

We can offer our Oyate the healing and land-based initiatives needed but more importantly it is important to note that they are created by community for community, then reinforced by our lands and youth committees and strengthened and supported by our leadership. This ensures that we always remember we work in service to community and meet the needs of the community, this sometimes needs careful communication and transparency notes.

Economic Development and capacity building are always at the forefront. With major project developments on the way, including Petro location expansion, the growth in our gardens program and the hydroponic unit is increasing. Our grasslands and bison herds projects and future prosperity, as always, we aim to create capacity building solutions that are viable and can create and foster change that can last generations, with always a seven-generation line of thinking.



LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Youth, the future is now, the future is here:

With seven generational thinking in always in mind, the SVDN land department is always looking at creating economic development strategies and create jobs and opportunity to all our Oyate with a heavy focus on youth and youth prep for employment. Working closely with our many departments to provide cost share opportunities to drive down costs for the nation and allow more people to be employed through the band through a series of proposal driven funding streams on both the federal and provincial allocations streams and growing our projects to expand nationally and even internationally. 2024 saw over 20 jobs created, including eight full time lands summer student positions, and a no kid left behind policy was adopted that bridged and cost shared with other departments to ensure all students were employed.

As the programs expand to one day achieve self sustaining or even profitable self revenue streams, promoting sound economic development strategies and opportunities for our next generation remains top priority. Not only this, we look to aim to have those youth heard at our various tables, even conversations and meeting with leadership and all the way through to our actual committees, fully included which also includes pay. This planning began with proposal driven lands grants written in 2024, which are now in full swing.

To see this taken a step further, we wrote to have additional streams of funding to be made available for the Wipazoka Wakpa youth council and wrote to C and C to propose additional allocations of provision and funding to have that group funded and promote some of their ranks right into the workforce here in SVDN Governance buildings. We have already begun the process of the youth transition in real time which started in pre planning in fall of 2024 all the way to present day which we now see today. Congratulations guys!

One of the proudest things this department has witnessed with the nation is that from previous administration to current, the ideas change and the vision to get there differs but the message never waivers. The youth and their development take precedent over anything, and the leaps this leadership has taken to incorporate them is much appreciated. Lands wrote for and was approved for several grants that had a youth focus for employment as the key, it is truly rewarding and fulfilling to watch these young Dakotas find their path, and our department is genuinely happy to help.

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Growth, (a growing nation needs a growing lands program):

We also look to our programs to continue to grow in all 4 directions that allow the programs to be more self-sufficient and self driven revenue generation. We nurture these revenue streams to blossom so that these branches of the lands department can one day sit on their own one day and be more self-reliant and not be dependent on those proposal driven or other funding streams from government or other. The goal would be to see these other branches become trees with roots of their own and start to grow branches of their own and so forth. Once we achieve the goal of food sovereignty this will be truly self governing, for the people by the people. Growth also means to listen to criticism.

At our land events we always have and provide surveys so that our Oyate can voice not only concerns, but also ideas - sometimes this leads to magical collaboration, or pejuta waste (good medicine). We always look forward to ways of improving our communication efforts - sometimes that there is an incredible idea a community member might have. Often, this is where the magic happens, and true communication and growth occurs. The department thanks all the Oyate for attending our lands events and using this time as a constructive platform to ensure your voice is heard in a positive manner that benefits all. Pidamiya do!

Education, (an investment worth while, no matter your age):

As our great nation grows and we begin the journey towards meaningful truth and reconciliation measures of realistic remediation and reflect true values and economic opportunities of actual substance like land claims and land back strategies. If our youth are educated in ways of creating a generation of wealth and not the poverty left by the damage of residential schools and intergenerational traumas, we can teach this generation how to be ranchers, and livestock herders and land managers. This would allow us to shift away from the colonial assimilation of our great people, and towards a future that would see a generation of wealth being created.

With Stats Canada predicting over 100,000 farms to be lost over the next decade, we can educate our youth now to take on these vital roles. Not only does this promote and restore our proud identity as the original Great Plains INA MAKOCE protectors, but it also ensures the continued expansion of our people to assert their inherent right and the official land guardians and stewards of the Prairie grasslands region from the great mountains of the west all the way to the great lakes of the east and everything between.

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Conservation, (protecting our lands for this generation, and the next):

With policy upheld in 2024 to not allow any chemical farming and to not have any non SVDN people to farm any of our lands we are starting to see our hunting numbers and opportunities for wild game grow on several fronts. The continued protection and conservation of our lands from chemical practices and harmful agricultural contaminants that end up in the air, land, and water - we have started to see a real shift in the recent once desolate lands and now we see greenery and soils starting to rebound in all directions of our nation.

Here in SVDN we house over 10 species at risk including the two cornerstone species of the prairie grassland ecosystem, the wood and plains bison. Together with our wildflower infusion and wildlife corridors enhancements being infused into our grasslands restoration project areas, are allowing all species, animals, plants and even microbes to flourish! We have even found once thought extinct plants right here in SVDN! This work and more has led us to be featured in the National Native Seed Strategy Magazine and Newsletters!

Prairie Grasslands Restoration Project (Protecting the most endangered eco system in the world):

We have already begun this great work with over 100 acres now officially restored and verified by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). This allowed us to enhance the funding stream to over half a million and allow for an additional 250 acres of grassland to be restored here in SVDN to be achieved this spring/summer.

We were able to achieve this through expanding last year's funding and through new partnerships with NCC and restoring vast tracts of grasslands across the nation. We continue to include our youth in this work, which offers connection to the lands. Soils are rejuvenated and regenerating. To date, we are leading the charge for Indigenous nations in verified grasslands restoration, and this has been confirmed by ECCC, FCC, NCIAC, NCC Skinner Native Seeds, and AAFC, we have now connected with leads specialists in Manitoba for Bison and Grasslands work.

Bison, (food sovereignty and Economic Development Capabilities):

We have begun conversations for collaboration with several First Nations across Manitoba on a new Bison and grasslands sharing circle. Discussions include celebrating traditional and Indigenous wisdom on bison, grasslands and conservation efforts through creating knowledge sharing opportunities, SVDN has been chosen as the lead in these areas.

These conversations began with the success of last year's Facts Camp, as we brought many major players to the nation. From there, we were able to form partnerships with AAFC, NCIAC, FCC and NCC's

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Colin Alt to start to piece together a bison strategy that reduces some of the burden on the nation with additional funding and financial solutions that help pivot the operational expense and finances into a more beneficial one for the nation.

We are doing this by creating education and training opportunities and additional funding provisions that help. This, coupled with meat processing and sale of product could turn the operation into a major economic success. We have officially started the next steps of that process and now have triggered funding to help in some of these areas through workshops and conferences being hosted by the nation itself. As the circle grows for the bison and grassland group so will our circle of influence as we pivot the operation toward real gains.

Our herd is now growing to numbers that require our herds to be split to ensure our blood lines remain strong and inbreeding does not occur. With that in mind we have created a new pasture to the north, over 100 acres of bison habitat was successfully created and considered and verified in 2024. With the help of our partners and grassland expert John Skinner, we have successfully resorted 100 acres of prime bison real estate, to ensure healthy herds for the future prosperity of SVDN.

In the fall of 2024, we were able to successfully prep and write funding for an additional 250 acres to the south of the current bison enclosure. This will allow for another herd to be rotated in and out, further expanding operations. The ranch location being utilized to separate yearlings have allowed SVDN to ensure our nations bison blood lines stay pure, it is pivotal we maintain the royal bloodlines we have as our herd has some of the bigger animals in the nation and we aim to keep it that way.

In efforts to promote unity and further Dakota pride and prosperity - 10 bison (one white), were gifted by SVDN to help restore more Dakota territory in Birdtail. Through this and an upstart in their haying operations gives everyone yet another opportunity for some economic benefit, with the idea of a Dakota Co-Op and even teaching them how to create a grasslands and haying operation to be created there. We are offering haying trades and bison management to exist beyond just our borders - as this opens trading talks and a starting point at an eventual Dakota first bison enterprise. We are looking forward to a future where all Dakota have bison on their lands, this was gifted to the youth of the Birdtail, to ensure a bright future for all Dakota youth.

The bison program is now starting to come full circle and once again become a powerful resource to the Dakotas as it always should have been before European contact.

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Gardens and Grocer Unit

(hydroponics and emergency preparedness food security):

With the grocer unit over 400k in debt, operations over 299k in debt, plus salaries and other, left quite a staggering challenge to tackle. The department was asked to look into this mid year, (2024), the first task was promoting our staff, Gardens manager, Gardens Supervisor and a lead hand, we were able to accomplish this with a proposal with SCAP which allowed us to relieve some of the pressure on SVDN and our funding for governance for 100k.

Once we were able to hold the grocer people accountable for the 486 debt, things began to change. When the department first toured the grocer it was sad to see a pile of wires and the rubble pile it was (which was supposed to be a half million dollar hydroponics unit) was frustrating, after holding the builders accountable they agreed to an additional 68k to be allocated to SVDN to get the thing up and running. Upon further investigation it was discovered that it was built to Ontario code and not Manitoba Hydro code, which again caused more issues.

We are happy to report we are now fully producing at incredible levels, contributing to community giveaways. We wrote successful proposals to help erase the combined debt and helped turn the operation around. We are looking forward to a successful 2025, thank you to our Gardens staff.

2BT (Two Billion Trees Program):

With last year seeing us successfully plant over 200 trees and over 400 seedlings, we were able to finally root our tree program in tangible success with the upstart of a SVDN tree orchard. Playground and park shade trees for our youth, families and students to enjoy and of course with the south westerly winds, shelter belts for our gardens, and our Oyate. The summer student program in combination with community members and other support staff successfully planted over 500 trees in SVDN in 2024, and fully funded a 20k tree watering trailer, equipment, salaries and youth funding, at no cost to the nation.

We started to be-LEAF in ourselves and the growth this had on our youth was tremendous, the pride the department saw in their community! When we planted out first 10, the youth looked like we were not going to survive the next hour, not only did they survive, they proudly know that the 8 weeks we spent together is the stuff of legend as they themselves have a forever story, we began forever change in SVDN that was created by beautifying our lands! This year will see 750 trees for individual homes and tree planting workshops in SVDN, from 2024 groundwork we laid the foundation and put down roots for our tree program to grow. We anticipate similar funding for this year.

If we can get lucky enough to get a second watering trailer, the department will be pushing hard to get a larger one, the larger trailer doubles as a fire prevention system that can be filled with the gel - this could also help keep our community safer.

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Science Technology and Innovation, (stem-science technology engineering and math):

We successfully saw our drone program introduce 14 new pilots that compliments our 5 current SVDN drone pilot squad, with one member already a pilot that means SVDN saw the 20-drone pilot number reached in 2024.

This concept was developed for the youth in 2025. Stay tuned as we hope to deliver more opportunities. 2024 saw us bring in contracts for flood mapping using drones, and drone seeding as well as GSAR. Lands and FNSO successfully completed ground search and rescue training, and the new drone can be equipped with heat and thermal attachments, we were fully approved for the 500k in funding that will see a new wave of tech to help both with emergencies, with crop and hot spotting, preventing potentially fires and other departments like EE and ensuring our homes are energy efficient with Darby and Nathan.

We received 125k in funding for future upgrades for deep retro fits for the nation, the elders housing concepts by the lodge and the density housing concepts now built in central. We now are seeing true and meaningful impacts here in Lands, it is deeply fulfilling to see the work done in 2024, starting to pay off in major ways for the betterment of the Oyate and SVDN.

Water and Soil testing: We have written and been approved to test all water resources in SVDN, this includes surface and streams, and all ag run offs. We also will be testing in all four directions and creating your workshops throughout SVDN, we managed to get the funding approved just before fiscal year end.

As an added bonus, we also managed to get Manitoba Ag interested in doing soil testing throughout SVDN - this will allow our youth to become youth scientists and participate in the actual collection of these samples. We also will be conducting these during summer months to that all youth can be included. There will also be a fishing event called "Fishing for science" - another lands concept that we were lucky to get funding for.

BIRS (Brandon Indian Residential School Site):

The Brandon residential school team and the lands department have a strong history of working together. A lot of their team are very technical with major skills and advanced areas with tech, math, research, sciences and computer coding, which often acts as that next level of education for our youths learning for the nation. Katheirne Nicols, Brent Perrin, Ling Jing, Kate Dectar and Chirstopher Mancuso often help lands when we are creating more advanced educational components for our youth. We have collaborated on proposals and landed them in 2024. From the water projects to drone flood mapping, we had an eventful 2024 together. From the first drone squad to the sciences behind the work, EMP, Lidar, Mag technologies and GPR, their team has helped the department and the youth to learn more advanced lands technologies, from mapping, to virtual 3d mapping all the way to GIS. They helped

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

create the next level of learning for all ages but more importantly our youth. We will look to carry 2024 movement into 2025 so our youth can truly capitalize on this synergy created by lands and BIRS.

People First (Lands Greatest Achievement):

Thurman Darby Essie: It has been a pleasure of mine to not only see our youth promoted and succeeding in all areas but also our core lands staff. One of the first impacts the community noticed was Darby; to hear the elders tell me they saw a change in him since the day I started. It has brought my great honour and fulfillment and happiness to watch this growth, 2024 seeing Thurman Darby Essie asked to be directly under my wing, his inclusion into the lands work and lands committee helped him to continue to grow and flourish. The workload took a toll on him and his ankles, lol, but the transformation seen by many and told to me repeatedly brings the department great pride as he continues to grow and learn and improve.

To see him over in housing and learning even more still makes me proud, the hear the Kunshis themselves tell me the change they witnessed from my inception here is remarkable. I am proud of his continued growth, he told me just the other day he learned from two of the best - Nathan and myself, truly made me emotional. It is the Oyate and the people who make that big family, make me as lands director so proud to be here and trying to make a positive change truly meaningful work, so great big wopida to the Oyate and those difference makers.

Jennifer McIvor: To watch the frustration that once existed turn into pride and watch to program begin to flourish, another proud moment and person to mention is our garden manager, I am proud of the decision to promote Jennifer to Manager, to watch this decision become legendary now, and to get her into the women in leadership post secondary program and watch her graduate is one of the proudest decisions I made in 2024.

To see a mother of SVDN prosper within lands makes me so very proud, to see them flourish and still ensure the unique challenges that there schedules sometimes have makes me proud as the lands director to showcase that this occurs within our employment. Ainsley Tacan also did some amazing work with us in 2024, and seeing new rebirth while also our gardens have new life, it is hard not to imagine the two are not connected, congratulations guys.

These powerful Dakota Women are important role models and doubly important for our next generation of powerful Dakota women to see these Strong women in important positions. I think it speaks for itself to have mothers in leadership roles throughout the nation, this occurs at every level and in every department and is one of the key fundamentals to creating the positive change we are looking for here In SVDN when healing and change is so needed.

Shane Mazawasicuna: I am very proud of Shane and his promotion to Gardens Supervisor, another decision implemented in 2024, to see him attend college and pass has brought me great joy, his upbeat and positive attitude and hard work ethic make it easy to promote our gardens and showcase what hard work can achieve and the transformation of the working area in the gardens is of course because of his work ethic.

Koda and Zane Tacan: The day in and day out our growing needs of the buffalo often and easily stretch to long hours and weekends work, with haying duties and other needs like watering and the ongoing pressures a growing herd needs, sometimes we forget the hard work of our bison and herdsman, from building fences to teaching youth and culture these boys do it all, super proud to know you and super proud to see the work paying off!

LANDS: FROM THE GRASS ROOTS UP

Congratulations on your equine therapy certificate, you do SVDN proud, also a change in 2024 was seeing provision offered to help our herdsman more, great work guys. Well earned.

Special honour to Lands Committee, Nathan Ironman, Hanwakan Whitecloud, Brock Sioux, Daniza De Paola, Kim Dowan McKay, Sharon Tacan, Darby Essie and the new inclusion of the youth Council infusion, Wipazoka Wakpa Youth Council, and Junior Chief and Council!

Challenges

Our key challenge here in SVDN lands is that we don't receive core funding from the nation, so all we do is done by funding, grants and proposal driven work, partnerships and good old fashioned hard work. Along the way some of those funding agreements make more sense for other departments to run.

This creates unique challenges as we are often required to meet and gather resources and funding across the nation. It brings great pride to secure these agreements and ensure the benefit reaches all SVDN Oyate, to bring in agreements that see our people promoted to manager, or that youth that once dreamed to be here now hired, to see our people get that raise they waited for, or to get that home they needed or to get that education they require for their children to live good lives, that is deeply fulfilling.

To see the lands department (once at -17k when started) becoming a multimillion dollar fully funded operation and now off helping other departments into the positive provides all the inspiration one needs, it has us feeling that lands is pulling our weight and creating true collaborative efforts with other departments for the betterment of the Oyate.

With no funding and even less workers, capacity is always an issue, we hope to address this with employment and training and getting more young people to work, of course this will also be needing to be funded, so this once again becomes the key issues as we progress, our hope is to one day have all programs self sufficient and own source revenue funded, so until then, we will always give it our all. We are getting closer everyday, grateful to be part of the change.

It would be nice to one day have a funding stream built into the self government funding designed solely for lands, this is always the challenge every year, and funding for an environmental branch as well, this could allow more talent to be hired.

PETRO CANADA/DAKOTA VALLEY GAS MART LIMITED (DVGML)

Staff:

- Raphael Fawoye, General Manager
- Josh Hapa, Finance
- Cameron Noel Jr., Inventory
- Arryl Cameron, Supervisor
- Spencer Smoke, Supervisor
- Roderick Elk Jr., Guest Services Attendant
- Verna Fiddler, Guest Services Attendant
- Lucas Pratt, Guest Services Attendant
- Marcus Whitecloud, Guest Services Attendant
- Jackson Hotain, Guest Services Attendant
- William Sinclair, Guest Services Attendant
- Aaron Elk, Guest Services Attendant
- Jonah Francis, Guest Services Attendant
- Aunessa Jetty, Guest Services Attendant
- Janaya Haarhoff, Guest Services Attendant
- Jordan Melville, Guest Services Attendant
- Patrick Hall, Guest Services Attendant
- Peter Francis, Guest Services Attendant



Introduction:

Dakota Valley Gas Mart Limited (SVDN Petro-Canada) is one of the major SVDN business investments established to make life convenient for the community and more importantly for economic development. In it's 8 years of operations, the investment has created an opportunity for business network with companies and organizations within and outside it's immediate environment. The business brought an awareness campaign about SVDN community to the province of Manitoba and Canada as whole because of the strategic location on the highway 1 and 21, coupled with its 24 hours operation. Our operations covers sales of fuel (Regular gas, Mid grade, Premium and Diesel) and basic consumer needs. The network of customers and its patronage has been impressive, and this keep growing every year.

PETRO CANADA/DAKOTA VALLEY GAS MART LIMITED (DVGML)

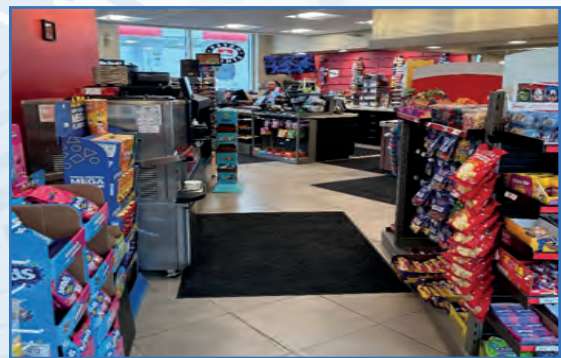
Key Issues/Challenges:

Diesel Pump Dispenser Accident: There was an accident with our diesel pump 9&10 in May 2025, and this resulted into a serious fuel spillage. It was a great loss to the business in terms of the actual fuel wastage and the fact that it grounded diesel operation for the whole year.

Storm and wind Damage: In 2024/2025 financial year, we experienced a stormy wind that damaged our roof eaves and the pump area canopy icon. The canopy icon damage did not give us a good brand image for a long time until it was fixed.

Damaged sidewalk: This didn't give us a good visibility for patronage because it was always difficult to keep the customers away from the spot. However, we ensure that there was no record of accident until it was fixed.

Challenge with rides to work: This is a big challenge to DVML employees. It's always difficult to get a ride to and from work and this is impacting on the punctuality and attendance of team members.



Activities and Accomplishments:

Towards the end of fiscal year 2024/2025, the business operations have stabilized, and this is because of employee dedication and commitment to work, a positive response to on-the-job training.

We have fixed the damaged canopy icon, and this is a plus to our brand image especially to existing and new customers. We also fixed the side work and have signs to designated parking space to avoid damage to tarred pump areas.

The big space around the gas station, we encourage travellers to take a short rest over night, and we leverage on this for patronage of the store items. In fact, we are adding more clothing and automobile items to our line of products. Presently, we are the only one stock store (Store with multiple products) in this trade area.

We are key member of SVDN community and so we honour request for donations and support to community activities such as the Holiday Horse/Sleigh ride December 29, 2024.

In the new financial year, we hope for a smooth operation that will ensure more traffic/volume as we install a new diesel pump dispenser. We will continue to ensure exceptional customer service so that we can sustain and improve on public review of the business.

DAKOTA QUICK STOP

Staff:

- Jordan Beardy-Manager
- Damari Silva-Head Cashier
- Jaden Hall-Gas Pump Attendant
- Catharine Davis-Cashier
- Carson Davis-Cashier
- Keely Melville-Cashier
- Destiny Benn-Cashier

Introduction:

- Gas Station/Retail/Grocery outlet.
- Service hub for departmental fleets.

Key Issues/Challenges:

- Providing up to date information for the community (events or community service alerts)
- Keeping the building and its equipment up to date/code.
- Providing appropriate necessities for community members without reliable transportation.
- Balancing margins with a core value to providing for lower income families/households.

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Providing the community with a wide assortment of confectionary and grocery items while maintaining low prices for basic necessity items.
- Consistently maintains a positive and safe environment for all its patrons.
- Customer appreciation BBQ during the summer. (no pictures were taken, will provide for next annual report)
- Provided Donations for Baseball teams
- Provided Donations for Mature Grade 12 graduates
- Updated user software for cashiers
- Upgraded Debit terminal
- CPR/First Aid training for 5 employees
- New fridge to replace the old one

GRAND VALLEY PARK

Staff:

- Robert Fleury, Manager

Introduction:

Grand Valley Park maintenance and operations. The Park has three mandates: Campground, Cultural Initiatives, and the Tubing Hill, based on lease agreement with the Province.

Key Issues/Challenges:

Outdoor bathrooms for the campground need plumbing repairs and renovations. Online booking system has not worked for two years due to the contract; this should be fixed soon. The campground needs roads re-surfaced to access all camp sites. The tubing hill not opened due to tow rope repairs and maintenance. Can be looked at as soon as possible.

Activities/Accomplishments:

Sioux Valley High School utilizes park for many cultural activities including processing a deer, hiking and culture lessons. Other Culture camps included Little Teaching Lodge Brandon, West Region Child and Family Services and Dakota Tiwahe Services. Free Concert featuring Ernest Monias. Chief & Council approved the purchase of two inflatable waterslides, and we will be offering them all summer, weather permitting.

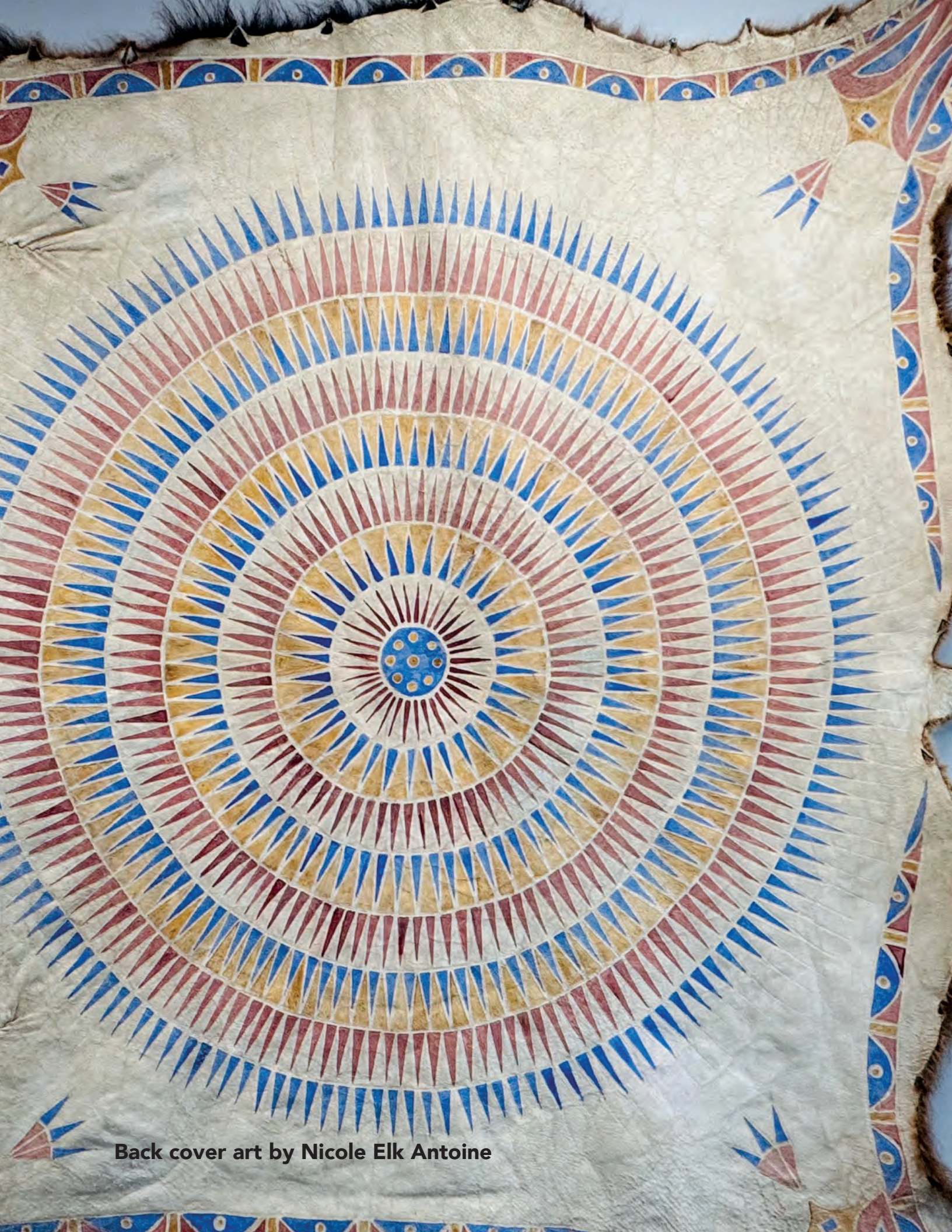


A blue-toned illustration of a Native American man on a horse, holding a bow and arrow, with a geometric pattern in the bottom left corner. The illustration is set against a background of horizontal lines. The man is depicted in profile, facing left, with a feathered headdress. The horse is also in profile, facing left. The background features a repeating geometric pattern of triangles and diamonds. In the bottom left corner, there is a colorful geometric pattern consisting of concentric diamonds in red, yellow, and blue. The entire image is overlaid with a series of horizontal lines, suggesting it is a template for writing.

A blue-toned background image featuring a Native American figure on horseback, holding a bow and arrow, with a geometric pattern overlay. The figure is positioned in the center, facing right. The horse is galloping. The background has a subtle geometric pattern of triangles and lines. In the top right corner, there is a small, colorful geometric design. The overall style is modern and artistic.

Notes

A blue-toned illustration of a Native American man on a horse, holding a bow and arrow, with a geometric pattern in the bottom left corner. The illustration is set against a background of horizontal lines, suggesting a notebook page. The man is depicted in profile, facing left, with a feathered headdress. The horse is also facing left. The background features a subtle geometric pattern, and the bottom left corner has a more prominent, colorful geometric design.



Back cover art by Nicole Elk Antoine



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