

41st Keewaywin Conference

KEEWAYWIN AWARDS



Nishnawbe
Aski Nation

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50TH ANNIVERSARY



1973 - 2023

2023 KEEWAYWIN AWARDS

August 16, 2023

The Keewaywin Awards recognize the outstanding accomplishments of NAN citizens and their contributions to our Nations. Recipients are honoured during the Keewaywin Awards Banquet held during each annual Keewaywin Conference.

The Executive Council congratulates this year's recipients for their tremendous achievements that have improved the lives of our members and strengthened our First Nation communities.

Your accomplishments are the result of hard work and dedication. The leadership you have demonstrated is an inspiration to us all.

Chi-Miigwetch!



Emile Nakogee Award for Outstanding Leadership

The Emile Nakogee Award for Outstanding Leadership is named in honour of the late Emile Nakogee, a NAN Elder who was very influential in the advancement of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in their field of work.



Abraham Keesickquayash

Cat Lake First Nation

Abraham Keesickquayash is from Cat Lake First Nation. He has served as a Council member for the last three terms and is well regarded as a dedicated community member and leader.

Abraham is always willing to take on new challenges, especially when his community, family and friends are facing times of crisis. His commitment to Cat Lake is recognized by members of this remote Ojibway community.

Known for his reliability and compassion, Abraham has become a source of comfort over the years for many families who have experienced the sad loss of their loved ones. He takes the lead making arrangements for burial plots no matter what time of year, and helps families understand the process of the burial. He is a great help to all, without prejudice to anyone.

NAN Elder Award

The NAN Elder Award honours the leadership and dedication of our Elders to the growth of our Nations and the support they provide to NAN communities and leadership.

Recipients share their knowledge and wisdom through the guidance they provide and their teaching of cultural and traditional values and customs.



Teri Fiddler

Sandy Lake First Nation

Theresa Fiddler, known to many people as Teri, is originally from Big Grassy River First Nation and Shoal Lake First Nation. She now considers home to be Sandy Lake First Nation, where she and her late husband Josias Fiddler raised their family.

Teri graduated with a Social Services Worker Diploma from Confederation College at the age of 61 and is an active member of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. In addition to her professional work, Teri serves as an Elder and Knowledge Keeper for many organizations including the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Chiefs of Ontario, and the Assembly of First Nations.

Teri has provided leadership and guidance on many initiatives to improve the lives of people across NAN territory. She is honoured for her knowledge, understanding, compassion, and empathy for the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

NAN Woman Award

The NAN Women Award honours the sacred role of women. It recognizes members who demonstrate strong family values or have made outstanding achievements in their careers or education.

Many recipients are acknowledged for improving the lives of women, youth, and children by sharing traditional knowledge, preservation of language, and promotion of healthy lifestyles.



Ardelle Kamenawatamin

Bearskin Lake First Nation

Ardelle Kam is a hardworking Nishnawbe woman who was born and raised in Bearskin Lake First Nation.

As a single mother of five children, Ardelle is known to always put her family and friends first. She has demonstrated her dedication to her community by working on many projects and activities to improve the lives of community members, especially youth. She has volunteered and fundraised for many community events over the last decade and works hard to encourage young people to get active and get involved. She has outstanding leadership skills, and always finds a way to make sure that sports are available for youth every season, despite minimal program funding.

Ardelle has a positive outlook on life and encourages all Nishnawbe people to believe that they can achieve anything they put their minds to.

NAN Youth Award Leadership

The NAN Youth Award - Leadership recognizes young leaders who are leading the way to a better and brighter tomorrow for future generations. Many recipients have served on the NAN Oshkaatisak Council, and some have accepted leadership roles at the provincial and federal level.



Austin Winters

Kingfisher Lake First Nation

Austin Winters is from Kingfisher Lake First Nation and recently graduated from the Basic Radio Technologist program at Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute.

Austin is known as a hard worker both at school and in his community. He has demonstrated his dedication to his community by hosting volleyball games and encouraging everyone to participate, as he believes it is important for all community members to come together.

Austin is a self-taught photographer who began taking photos when he was just 13 years old. In addition to photography, he enjoys going out on the land to fish and hunt, especially during seasonal goose hunts.

NAN Youth Award Community Involvement

The NAN Youth Award - Community Involvement recognizes young people who are active in their communities. These leaders are often volunteers in community events and activities, work with youth organizations, and organize activities for youth and children in their home communities.



Layla Metatawabin

Kashechewan First Nation

Layla Metatawabin is a 13-year-old Mushkegowuk Cree, originally from Kashechewan First Nation, and currently living in Kapuskasing.

Layla graduated Grade 8 from Diamond Jubilee Public School this year and received the Principal's Award for Excellence and the Cree Award. She was part of the Grade 8 Leadership Committee and delivered a speech on why her school deserves new basketball equipment. Layla is interested in acting and the film industry, and recently attended the Weengushk International Film Festival.

Layla loves sports and is known as a great team player. She is a wonderful friend, likes to meet new people, and is always up to new challenges and experiences. She is described as ambitious, adventurous, funny, inclusive, a hard worker, and very organized. She has received the Workhorse Award for her leadership, work ethic, and good spirits during adversity.

A great support to her peers, family, and community, Layla hopes that one day youth can look up to her and know that they will be able to achieve their goals.

NAN Staff Award

The NAN Staff Award recognizes an individual who is acknowledged by their colleagues for their outstanding work at Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Recipients go over and above in the performance of their duties and responsibilities, and exceed expectations in their daily work for the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.



Ashley Jellema

Ashley Jellema is Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Mental Health Training Coordinator in the Community Wellness Department. Ashley's passion for mental health and wellness shines through her work in communities and at the office.

Ashley's dedication to NAN First Nations can be seen through willingness to respond to all calls for assistance, even on short notice and after hours. Ashley always puts others first and looks for ways to support communities in any way she can, including debriefing, engaging with youth, and completing door-to-door check-ins. Her thoughtfulness can be seen as she personally picks out gifts to bring to the youth in the communities she visits.

Ashley works very hard to ensure that front-line workers and her colleagues are well taken care of and have the resources they need to practice self-care. She is well-respected, well-liked, and has worked selflessly and respectfully as a member of the NAN Team.



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