



NE-CHEE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

The doors of the First Friendship Centre opened in Canada in 1958, as Indigenous people began moving from reserves to urban areas. As Indigenous people relocated, they were faced with many problems in receiving services due to cultural differences, bureaucracy and the barriers of language and systemic prejudice. Friendship Centres began in order to assist Indigenous people with their adjustment and integration as they migrated into the urban environment.

The Friendship Centre Movement is the country's most significant off-reserve Indigenous service delivery infrastructure. For over a half century Friendship Centres have helped urban Indigenous people access the vital services they need to succeed in urban settings across Canada. Friendship Centres understand the challenges facing our communities and their unique "wrap-around" service delivery model ensures we are well equipped to tackle them.

Across the country, Friendship Centres provide culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people living in urban centres and have become a place for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to come together, to share traditions and to learn from one another.

The main objective for all Friendship Centres is to improve the quality of life for the urban Indigenous people. The main target groups of each Friendship Centre are the urban Indigenous population. This includes all age groups. Friendship Centres act as a support system to the community by providing programs that provide essential services which will assist them in contributing to the economy. These services are aimed at promoting the physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing of all Indigenous people.

Ne-Chee is the Ojibway word for a "close friend" or "brother". The Ne-Chee Friendship Centre was incorporated in 1976 and is managed by a Board of Directors which is elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Director, Human Resources Manager, Office Administrator, Finance Officer, and Administrative Assistant comprise the core staff.

Vision: To strengthen and support the lives of Indigenous People living in Kenora.

Mission: Ne-Chee Friendship Centre will provide a safe, caring and culturally respectful approach to wholistic health while inspiring a sense of community for all Indigenous People of Kenora.

Values: The seven Grandfather teachings: Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility & Wisdom.

There are over 125 Friendship Centres across Canada and 31 in Ontario who are represented by (OFIFC) the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. Ne-Chee Friendship Centre has 19 programs covering everything from health, justice, education, employment/training and social services. We have programs from pre-birth to the elderly and for all abilities.

NFC is an Indigenous Organization that serves Urban Indigenous People -

Definition of Indigenous – Status, Non-Status, Metis, and Inuit. Proof of Indigenous ancestry is not required to be a client of any program however they must self-identify as Indigenous.

Ne-Chee Friendship Centre is blessed to have a wonderful staff compliment that are dedicated to the mission, vision and values of the organization. NFC has been working hard at executing programming to meet the needs of the community.

Our Programs continue to provide advocacy, support, programming, activities, food, hygiene products, and cell phones/minutes for justice clients who are needing them for court etc. and our Mental Health & Addictions female clients who need them for appointments, safety etc.

Culture is at the forefront of how we conduct ourselves at the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre. NFC Staff incorporate culture into the activities and programming that they provide on a regular basis.

- Indigenous Healing & Wellness Supports individuals and families affected by violence, providing crisis intervention, traditional support, and long-term healing action plans.
- Urban Aboriginal Healthy Living promotes healthier lifestyles through fitness classes, nutrition workshops, smoking cessation support, and land-based programming for all ages.
- Lifelong Care provides programming & advocacy for Indigenous people of all ages that have physical disabilities, serious health issues, those who are frail and or elderly or who have isolation & social issues.

- Cultural Resource focuses on cultural knowledge and connections, providing access to teachings and practices that promote healing and reconciliation.
- Mental Health & Addictions provide culturally relevant Mental Health and Addiction interventions and support for Indigenous people. This program has an enhanced focus on Indigenous women in conflict with the law. This program has a Coordinator and a Peer Support Worker who has 'lived experience'.
- Indigenous Healthy Babies is designed to provide Indigenous families healthy opportunities for the development of their children (0–6 years of age) through education, family home visiting, service coordination and referrals.
- Aboriginal Family Support & Aboriginal Best Start Hub (ages 0-6) - Provides culturally based support for families with young children, offering parenting programs, nutrition workshops, and community-building activities.
- Indigenous EarlyON Kenora & EarlyON Sioux Narrows/Nestor Falls provide safe spaces for families with young children (ages 0-6) to connect and participate in developmental activities rooted in Indigenous culture.
- Akwe;go Children's Program aims to foster healthy choices and cultural pride among at-risk Indigenous children ages 7-12, providing them with the support they need to succeed.
- Wasa-Nabin Youth Program supports Indigenous youth (ages 13-18) in building life skills, promoting healthy choices, and fostering self-development through culturally relevant activities.
- Youth Life Promotion (ages 13-24) is designed to help at-risk youth reclaim their cultural identity through land-based activities and traditional teachings, fostering holistic well-being.
- Wewena ngiiwemaa (I'm taking her home safely) Program. This program supports the reintegration of Indigenous women from the Ministry of the Solicitor General's correctional system into their communities. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) funding is provided to work with Indigenous women in corrections' custody at designated Ministry correctional institutions to ensure that Indigenous women are able to access services that support rehabilitation while in the institution and receive assistance to develop a community reintegration plan. This will aid in safe reintegration once discharged back into the community.
- Indigenous Community Justice is a pre- and post-charge diversion program where participants create a Healing Plan that addresses offenses through cultural methods.
- Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin (I'm a Kind Man) was developed to engage Indigenous men and youth in ending violence against Indigenous women. The program is comprised of two components

- A provincial awareness campaign that provides public education, and
- A community-based program dedicated to healing Indigenous men and youth through reclaiming and revitalizing their positive Indigenous identity and their responsibility to end violence against Indigenous women and girls
- Restorative Justice Liaison works with law enforcement to provide pre-charge diversion options, reducing overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.
- Criminal Court Workers (work directly out of the Kenora Courthouse) and they assist Indigenous individuals in court, providing guidance, advocacy, and support to help clients make informed decisions within the justice system.
- Circle of Care Case Managers (work directly out of the Kenora Justice Centre) They work with youth using a trauma-informed approach, providing support and active case management. They act as one trusted point of contact to foster a trusted relationship and perform culturally relevant assessments and support planning

Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin and Indigenous Community Justice Program's (ICJP) have program designation by MAG in relation to Indigenous-Specific – Intimate Partner Violence Prevention (IS-IPVP).

- Intimate Partner Violence Prevention (IPVP) programs are Indigenous-specific, culturally relevant education and counselling programs for accused persons aimed at preventing domestic/intimate partner violence. Programs are designed, developed and delivered by Indigenous people to meet the unique needs of their communities and may also offer support to victims, families and community members who have been impacted by domestic/intimate partner violence

Employment & Training Program

- Indigenous Employment & Training Services offers job readiness, resume support, training opportunities, and apprenticeship programs to help Indigenous individuals meet their goals. We have assisted with costs for post-secondary tuition, books, residency fees, employment – employment supports such as workboots, clothing, wage subsidies, stay in school initiatives such as tutoring costs etc.

Education Program

- Indigenous Student Success (Grade 9 to 12 credits – Satellite of Beaver Brae High School. This program supports Indigenous students with academic resources, cultural guidance, and personal development. This past school year we had six graduates.

Community Events

- Spring and Fall Feasts – this year due to our Auditorium being renovated we are partnering with Morningstar Detox Centre at their Fall Feast – tomorrow (October 22 from noon to 2:30)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day – June 21
- Annual Community Christmas Dinner
- Indigenous Veterans Day Pow Wow – November 8. Due to renovations being done in our Auditorium we will not be having this year.
- Annual Christmas Parade

Creating a sense of belonging and somewhere for Urban Indigenous People to go is a goal of the NFC. While we have had to make some changes due to security issues, ie. Locking the door at the main building, people can still come and sit in the cultural area and have coffee, tea and a snack. We also provide clothing and hygiene products as needed. Our Staff will engage with the visitors and help as needed.

Ne-Chee values partnering with community service organizations that provide services to elders, families, children, youth and adults.

Our building #2 (Former Legion building) has a large auditorium which is offered at little to no cost, to community service providers for their programing and services as needed.

NFC has partnered with many different service providers in providing support, professional development and service to community members.

All Full-Time staff are required to sit on an external Board or Committee on behalf of Ne-Chee Friendship Centre that is relevant to their position. This assists in not only other service providers acquiring an understanding of Ne-Chee but also for our staff to learn about other organizations/agencies.

I sit on various committees and am a Board member of Women's Shelter Saakaate House.

Patti Fairfield
Executive Director
Ne-Chee Friendship Centre