

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

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Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.

Ka Ni Kanichihk, literally translated from the Ininew (Cree) language, means “those who lead” – an apt name that this non-profit community based organization. Established in 2002, Ka Ni Kanichihk is an Aboriginal human services organization governed by a council of First Nation and Metis peoples.

Ka Ni Kanichihk delivers a range of programs and services that build on an individual’s assets and resilience, and help to create social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg.

Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. grew out of a community consultation process led by a group of community leaders who recognized the need to create a multi-faceted Aboriginal organization. The mandate of this organization would be to provide relevant and culturally sensitive capacity building programs for Aboriginal people to support healing, recovery, leadership development, self-determination, and self-sufficiency.

As a result of these deliberations, Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. began offering integrated programs and services that focused on: cultural, spiritual, and physical wellbeing; training and employment; educational and leadership development; and community development. Each of these programs is rooted in the restoration and reclamation of Aboriginal Ancestral cultures. Ka Ni Kanichihk operates under the belief that they have been left a rich inheritance by their ancestors – traditional knowledge, languages, practices, customs and values – and it is by embracing this legacy that the decolonization process can be engaged. As →



→ such, Ka Ni Kanichihk's stated mission is "To awaken and heal the spirit of Aboriginal peoples that will guide us to our goodness, our strength, our beliefs, values, teachings, identity and our history, and to reclaim our rightful place within our families, our communities, and our Nations."

The Restoring the Sacred program, provides a variety of culturally relevant prevention and intervention programming, which encourage young Aboriginals who are new to the city to adopt health lifestyles, while avoiding the perils of drugs and crime. These newcomers are paired with peers or "buddies" who have been specially trained by Ka Ni Kanichihk to provide mentorship and support. One such program is the Circle of Courage program, which is targeted towards young Aboriginal males between the ages of 12 and 17 who are at risk of gang involvement. Circle of Courage is designed to foster an educational environment in which Aboriginal youth can learn about becoming leaders in their community, instead of followers in a gang. Participants are given the opportunity to participate in cultural ceremonies and traditions, and learn about the history of their ancestry in a supportive atmosphere.

In an effort to build leadership and community development skills among youth, Ka Ni Kanichihk also established the Aboriginal Youth Circle program, which is operated by a youth-led advisory committee comprised of individuals aged 15 to 25. This advisory committee contributes to the development and implementation of Ka Ni's youth projects. Through participation in the committee and its programming, young Aboriginals develop employable skills such as project design, hiring

project staff, and project evaluation.

In another effort to build capacity and skills for Aboriginal women Ka Ni Kanichihk has also partnered with Neeginan Institute of Technology to deliver the Information and Office Administrative Assistant Program, an accredited program of Red River College. After 10 months of classroom training, participants work in an 8-week practicum with government, businesses, community organizations, banks and credit unions, and various other settings. Upon completing the Administrative Assistant Program, students have an option to enroll in the Computer Application for Business program and receive their diploma.

For those who are interest in starting their own business, Ka Ni Kanichihk has created the Self Employment for Aboriginal Women (SEPAW) program. SEPAW operates under the assumption that there is much to be gained by combining entrepreneurship, CED, and cultural and learning. Therefore, while SEPAW assists women with conventional business models, they also support partnerships, co-operatives, and social enterprises. This 6-month program supports Aboriginal women entrepreneurship by providing training in small business management, marketing, advertising, money management, financial planning, and networking.

Ka Ni Kanichihk is a leading CED organization in Manitoba, built and led by "those who lead." The strength of their approach is rooted in the cultural and spiritual dedication to healing and health, as well as their commitment to building skill, capacity, and leadership toward creating self-sufficiency for the Aboriginal youth and women of Winnipeg.