

THE VICCIY PROJECT

Virtual Interventions and Community
Connections for Indigenous Youth

E-NEWSLETTER

April, 2024



A NOTE FROM VICCIY PROJECT LEAD, LINDSEY BOECHLER:

Thank you for signing up for the VICCIY Project's quarterly newsletter. The success of this wellness initiative hinges on the guidance, leadership, and dedication of youth, community members, decision-makers, and supporters like you. It's been a rewarding experience connecting with our partnering communities and many of you throughout the project's lifespan. Your backing is invaluable as we work towards our mission of providing holistic mental health and wellness resources to Indigenous youth regardless of their geographical location.

The VICCIY Project takes a multi-pronged approach to promote the well-being of Indigenous youth while simultaneously enhancing access to care, preserving Indigenous cultures and languages, and ensuring the resources being developed meet the diverse needs of Indigenous adolescents residing in rural, remote, and northern communities across SK.



The VICCIY Project pushes the boundaries of virtual presence in the domain of living well. Our next steps focus on scalability by fostering additional community partnerships and co-creating and trialing a virtual wellness framework designed by and for Indigenous youth that offers diverse, culturally congruent wellness support across multiple communities.

Press the  symbols throughout to link to additional resources and videos.

 [VICCIY Project Promo Video](#)

 [Call for Sponsorship](#)

Provincial Youth Wellness Summit October 2023



"The healing circle impacted me most, listening to Elder's perspectives!"



"I started opening up more in groups. It helped me feel better about myself."

A LOOK INTO OUR YOUTH SUMMIT

Saskatchewan Polytechnic hosted an inaugural Provincial Youth Wellness Summit, held at Dakota Dunes Resort on Chief Whitecap First Nation, from October 4th to 6th, 2023. A total of 68 grade 9 to 12 students from across 15 rural and remote SK communities attended. Youth from several Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous communities were invited to take part. Members of the community volunteered to chaperone the youth on their journey to wellness and traveled from near and far to attend.

The youth had 10 breakout session options to choose from—some cultural, some creative, some more serious—with sessions led by Indigenous role models and Elders, Legacy One, CrossFit 161, SK Indigenous Yoga Association (SIYA), Saskatchewan Prevention Institute, Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth, and a specialist in play therapy.

The summit also included a variety of large group activities including ice breakers, performances by a traditional hoop dancer and the Creeland Dancers, the Legacy One Assembly Show, a leadership presentation and "Who Am I" T-Shirt exercise led by USask Professor, Dr. June Anonson and presentations from role models, His Honour Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of SK and Mr. Jim Lemaigre, Member of Legislative Assembly of SK.

The youth had a great time interacting and meeting one another while singing karaoke, swimming, roasting marshmallows, and playing games in their downtime. A great time was had by all!

Attending communities included:

- La Loche
- Buffalo Narrows
- Red Earth Cree Nation
- Punnichy
- James Smith Cree Nation
- Shoal Lake Cree Nation
- Cumberland House Cree Nation
- Waterhen Lake First Nation
- Clear Water River Dene Nation
- Buffalo River Dene Nation
- Birch Narrows Dene Nation
- English River First nation
- Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation
- Ministikwan Lake First Nation
- Canoe Lake First Nation



[Click Here to View Full Summit Report](#)



A LOOK INTO VIRTUAL REALITY

Many youths expressed interest in the potential use of virtual reality (VR) in terms of supporting their well-being while remaining within their communities. Our team continued to work with the session facilitators following the summit to develop a library of VR content that was uploaded onto VR headsets. These VR headsets were gifted to each community that attended the summit in February 2024, allowing participating youth to revisit and share learnings from the summit with their peers. This component of our project aims to continue growing the technological capacity within partnering communities and is a first step in incorporating the use of VR technology to support the wellness practices of youths. The virtual library includes short segments of facilitators sharing their advice, motivational insight, or additional wellness practices for youth. This content has been personalized based on the presenters' experiences and connections with the youth during the summit breakout sessions. The VR library also includes a montage of student led recordings developed by attending youths as part of the Introduction to VR Technology session that was offered.



Hosting annual provincial summits will establish and foster strong connections among youth and empower partnering communities through capacity building and engagement. We hope that provincial summits grow to include additional communities, expanding the VICCIY initiative's reach.

The VICCIY team is currently seeking additional funding to trial a VR platform to gather inceptive evidence pertaining to the benefits of leveraging the metaverse to address existing gaps in mental health care and enhance existing wellness supports available to Indigenous youth. This trial would allow our team to host asynchronous and synchronous virtual wellness workshops and interventions; evaluate the efficacy of leveraging VR to provide mental health care and wellness resources; and assess the need for a secure, dedicated platform from new versus the feasibility of providing ongoing services through an existing platform with highly advanced technological features.



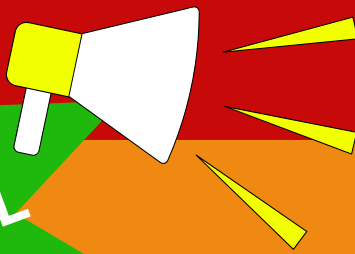
VR Recording of Fight for Hope with Jaycee from Legacy One



VR Recording of Story Telling with Carol Rose GoldenEagle

****Drag your cursor in the videos to see the 360 view if the recordings****

**CALLING
ALL
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS**



**THIS IS YOUR
CHANCE TO SHOW
YOUR ARTISTIC
CREATIVITY AND
ABILITY**

THE VICCIY PROJECT NEEDS A LOGO

- We are hosting a competition for youth to design a logo that represents the VICCIY Project's aim to promote a sense of safety, identity, belonging and community for youth.
- Anyone currently enrolled in grades 9 to 12 can enter their logo designs for their chance to win.
- All logo submissions will be displayed in our June newsletter and readers will have a chance to vote for their favourite! Amazing prizes will be awarded to the top 3 logo submissions.
- Put your creativity & artistic ability to the test! Submit your logo!

**SUBMIT
YOUR
LOGO
HERE**

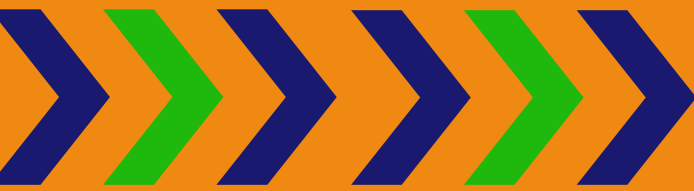


**DEADLINE
TO ENTER:
APRIL 15TH,
2024**

Interested in getting involved? Reach out to our Project Lead!



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