October 2026 Update - Anthony Owl

Youth Committee/Council

As the new term hits, we've decided to grow the capacity of the committee from 5 members to 9, with the addition of an elder/mentor support position to give the members someone they can lean on when conflict or concerns arise. The goal of the committee is to be pillars for future generations and help community & leadership navigate what is affecting the youth demographic. Updated policies and procedures that include the 7 Grandfather Teachings, workplace sensitivity when it comes to working with LGBTQ+, Mixed Indigenous, and physical and mental disabilities. We well also train our committee members to be certified in certain life skills like safe food handling, First Aid & CPR, behaviour management training, etc in order to be the best leaders and have the confidence when working within the community at certain events or workshops. The group will meet 1-2 times a month to go over opportunities to be involved in community events, and engagement opportunities like conferences off reserve.

London Health Science Tour

Walked through the Facility of St. Joesphs Hospital, visiting the breast cancer facility and medical imaging sector and saw more closely what they can offer for procedures and what equipment they have available within certain time frames, as well as how they work with the other local hospitals to be most efficient in making sure patients are cared for and in the best place possible. Their team seems more than up for future in-community engagements to share career pathways available and hospital tours if the community asks, and they will continue to bridge those engagements. These future engagements are meant to change the complex language used to help every member to have a good understanding of what medical isotopes actually are and remove some of the negative stigma about the radiation aspect. Learned about a chart of how certain isotopes are created, how they work with each other when used together, and a legible chart that makes it easier to comprehend; I also learned how it's used in molecular imaging to pinpoint where certain cancers are within the body to safely remove them with minimal tissue loss, which, in breast cancer, can be a huge factor in appearance in recovery and can affect an individuals mental health; I also learned that, although less common, men are still at risk for getting breast cancer.

They've had major advances in medical isotopes when it comes to detection and treatments, and they continue to learn and educate themselves and us on possible future advances as we continue to use these types of treatments.

Learned about the Pathways projects and high school student opportunities at LHSC for anyone, but specifically indigenous youth, to get involved and think about their future careers and how they could fit within the health sector even on a broader sense, whether that be shadowing these professions, joining courses and workshops, or scholarship opportunities, etc.

Aboriginal Men's Health and Wellness Sharing Circle

From the 19th- 22nd, I had the opportunity to take part in this sharing circle, with highlights being: Social & cultural determinants of health, Culture as a healing tool, Mental health & "Taming the Black Dog (Metaphor for Depression), AOD Treatment & Rehabilitation, Women's

Panel & site visits, Community strategies & Allies panel, etc. We hope to keep this type of gathering going and collaborate with our brothers and sisters overseas to build a long-lasting relationship that benefits not only the men but the people they affect and inspire others coming after.

Through this, I saw the live impact of a well-run and truly beautiful Men's Rehab Centre called "The Glen", so much so that during my time there, I met strangers who are now friends, enthusiastic to share about their recovery journey and testimonies of how they got there! I also brought a young woman from Saugeen who got to share some of her story, which was very well received by all attendees & workers; in addition, we brought a young man who came in unsure of himself or his belonging as far as being there, and left visually changed, emotionally & mentally.

With the information and connections gathered over the week, I hope to utilize some of the framework given by "The Glen" and revitalize/reframe it to fit into our own culture and identity as a community in SFN#29, as we are very similar in certain issues we face as a demographic, such as the drug epidemic, housing issues, gang/lateral violence, and internal racism for mixed indigenous members. This is just the start of something great and will continue to strive for mental health as a whole, but I'm currently putting in the work for our future warriors.

The goal moving forward is hopefully to continue to work with Dr. Bob Morgan to bring this "Men's Health & Wellness Sharing Circle" to Toronto, Ontario for the year 2027, in hopes of building upon this relationship with the Australia team, sharing the work done and experience gained over the last 40 years, turning this into a bi-annual gathering that will continue to protect and uplift our future warriors!

Youth Climate Action Research Forum

Volunteered to help/delegate for the event held at the Bayshore, aided by past work relations with "The Sustainability Project" and SON Environment Office, and made new connections to utilize for future events and collaborations. As part of this event, youth from 10 different schools had the opportunity to come together and learn about the advances and environmental issues impacting their generation now through a multitude of workshops (Energy consumption, emissions, clothing waste, and so much more!) with solutions that they can implement in their day-to-day life. Within their school groups, students also developed a tangible idea/action plan they could take back to their schools and start implementing tomorrow; each group presented their ideas publicly to a group of delegates (myself included) who chose which school would receive a cash grant of $ 300 to support their initiative. It was an amazing thing to see youth in grades 3-8 present their climate action plans with enthusiasm and cheer on there peers for such a great cause that affects all.

Recommendations From Youth

Refillable water bottle stations in public places (ie., library, Parks, School, etc.), butterfly gardens and bee hotels to encourage pollination, Clothing & Resource swap (winter wear, Halloween costumes, Garden tools), Annual rose gardens to celebrate graduations, and these could go on!

Annual Halloween Dance

On the 30th, we held our annual Halloween dance, which was a hit with both the youth and parents who attended. Special thanks to Melissa Kaugee-Ritchie, who took on the event at the last minute and created a lively and safe environment for the youth to have fun and also MC'd the various games and costume contests; Seqouyah Cubbit, one of the new youth committee members and I, with Blane Roote (who was working at the concession stand all night) as a tie-breaker, were the judges of the costume contest and picked the spots for spot dances. Another thanks to “Reel Dreams Entertainment” for providing the music and snow cones & popcorn while supplies lasted, which wasn't long. Snacks and refreshments included chips, candy bags, pop & juice, water, and lots of pizza & garlic bread. Thanks to Rec Centre staff, Tiffany Kewageshig and Dean Martin for the help and support with set-up and big clean-up afterwards.