



Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership

Reconciliation in Action

Visit our website

Follow us on Facebook

Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership Summer 2019 Newsletter

**The Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership is Working: Boreal Homebuilding
Students Design and Build Houses with Local Wood**



Wasagamack and Garden Hill communities after their chainsaw safety course logged all winter. They logged and sawed sufficient wood to build a stick frame house with wood paneling and wood siding. They are now in the construction phase. The student recently took CORE certified construction safety courses. Eighteen students passed in Garden Hill and sixteen in Wasagamack. They are now

set to build the house that they helped designed (with the help of architects and engineers) at the beginning of the course in October 2018. Daryl Wastesicoot, a First Nation carpenter and construction manager is overseeing the builds in the two communities. Stay tuned to see photos and consider coming up to help frame in August.



Press on the video below to see the design and training process to produce culturally appropriate housing and build local capacity at Wasagamack First Nation and Garden Hill First Nation.

HOME DESIGN

WORKSHOP IN
WASAGAMACK & GARDEN HILL

The video can also be found on youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYz5xtLom8A&t=16s>

Designing and Building Wachusko Weesti by One House, Many Nations Assisted by Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership



Photos : Framing the Wachusko Weesti

Mino Bimaadiziwin partners recently teamed up with One House, Many Nations to assist with designing and building a muskrat hut in Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN). The One House, Many Nations' movement, founded by Indigenous activist group Idle No More, works to address the lack of quality housing found in First Nations and other indigenous communities. The campaign's impact has been both symbolic and real and has brought much-needed attention and awareness to the housing crisis and homelessness that affects Canadians and Indigenous peoples.



Photos : Framing the Wachusko Weesti

The Muskrat Hut is a small building traditionally used by hunter and trappers (wachusko weesti in Cree). This wachusko weesti is a building to help support land education and land defense with a mobile, off-the-grid sustainable washroom and kitchen unit as well as a sauna. This building is to make camping comfortable and clean for the environment and humans. In three days, the team framed and completed the exterior of the muskrat hut. The muskrat hut was designed and built with an incinerator toilet and wood stove to heat the sauna. Jason Knott, from Wasagamack First Nation, who is also a student of the Boreal Homebuilders Program, actively participated in the muskrat hut building, explained: *"So much was learned. Three days later, we had a finished exterior built on a trailer to be portable."*



Photos from Left to right - 1,5 Happy team with the newly build structure; 3,4 Students are working to build the hut, 2 Gift sharing with a community elder.

Many people from the partnership participated in building the muskrat hut. The Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership people included Roxanne Harper and Jason Knott from Wasagamack First Nation, Jason Surkan, Shauna Mallory Hill, Catrina Sallese, Kaoru Suzuki, Shawn Mallory Hill, Shirley Thompson, and Dr. Alex Wilson.

Alex Wilson coordinated the design program with Harvard trained architects, Jacob Mann, and Chris Cornelius as well as engineer Ryan Hunt in December 2018. Partnership people participated in this design exercise, namely Reanna Merasty, Jason Surkan, and Shirley Thompson. The design was to support Indigenous nation-building by fostering access to their lands and resources using sustainable technology to offer comfort and hygiene during land education and land defense. Then following designing this building, many participants in the partnership learned power tool use and framing when they built the muskrat hut. With the shell of the Muskrat Hut completed, the next phase is to finish the interior and the kitchen area during the coming July 17-July 21 work bee on the Hut. Stay tuned for the final photos and videos.

Six Mino Bimaadiziwin Students Graduate with Masters Degrees from University of Manitoba



The Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership congratulates the students, Kaoru Rayan Suzuki, Veronica Wojtuszcwska, Rezwanul Hoque and Kaylee Michnik for graduating with their masters this spring of 2019. As well two other Mino Bimaadiziwin partnership students, Pepper Pritty and Keshab Thapa graduated in the fall of 2018 and are now doing a doctorate funded through the Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership.

Photos from left to right- 1. Kaoru Rayan Suzuki, 2. Four generations of the Suzuki Family, 3. Veronica Wojtuszcwska, 4. A M Rezwanul Hoque.



Photos from left to right- 1. Keshab Thapa, 2. Pepper Pritty , 3. Kaylee Michnik.

Kaylee looked at Indigenous food sovereignty in Garden Hill First Nation (see her thesis at <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/33632>). Veronica worked with Victor Harper regarding Wasagamack First Nation and Island Lake to map 500 local Indigenous names, considering the importance of language (See her thesis at- <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/33841>). Rezwanul's thesis analyzed the housing crisis and the meaning of culturally appropriate housing in the Garden Hill First Nation (GHFN) in relationship with local social and economic activities (See his thesis at- <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/33692>). Interface the Land was Kaoru's thesis which applied performance art to build relationships with the land (See his thesis at- <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/33703>). Both Kaoru and Rezwanul are currently

working in the partnership project.

Pepper is a Registered Nurse and currently focusing in the areas of Indigenous and environmental health for her Ph.D. thesis. Pepper looked at indigenizing the healthy built and social environment framework in her master's thesis (see her thesis at- <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/33468>). Kesab is currently a Ph.D. student supported by the partnership grant. His master's thesis was on Indigenous land rights and Indigenous land use planning in Wasagamack First Nation (see his thesis at- <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/handle/1993/33359>). Kesab is currently researching food security and food sovereignty issues in Island Lake.

Boreal Homebuilding Students Participate in National Three Years Longitudinal Survey

A survey was conducted among Boreal Home Builders Program students to obtain information on whether their circumstances are improving economically, socially and psychologically by participating in this education and funding program. The survey was conducted on January 24-25, 2019 and fifteen and eleven students from Garden Hill First Nation (GH) and Wasagamack First Nation (WAS) respectively took part in the survey. The study is part of a national survey.

The Boreal Homebuilding program received many positive comments. The Employment and Training director, Ernie Harper from Wasagamack First Nation stated: *"We love to see hope in our youths. And I believe this program is giving them hope. It is amazing"*.

Garden Hill First Nation students talked about how the program allows them to stay in the community while the training allowance helps them to fund their education and support to their family. Some comments from the GH surveys are written below in quotes:

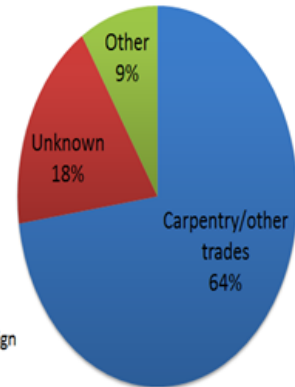
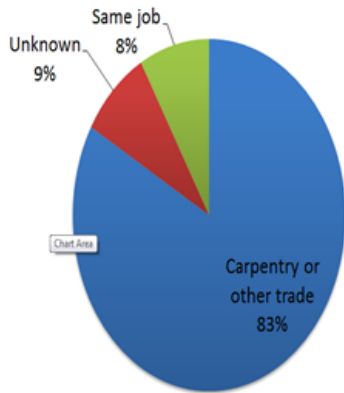
- "This program is good for the people in Garden Hill. We know how to make a house ourselves instead of waiting for a house to be built for us."
- "This training has impacted me positively by feeling better for myself and my family."
- "I know the training will benefit the community and me in the future."

The Wasagamack First Nation students were most happy about the solid credentials and learning opportunities with scopes to get their level 1 in Carpentry apprenticeship through this program. The WAS students comments about the program are in quotes. The students' quotes explain how they are benefiting from the program:

- "Keep this up because it's very helpful for people who have kids to have a better opportunity to find jobs."
- "[The program] has made me more optimistic and hopeful for my future."
- "I am enjoying this program; I've learned stuff that I had no idea to do."

Before the boreal homebuilding program, most students had been looking for a job (GH 53%, WAS 55%) as in these communities have few opportunities for paid work for youth. Lack of job training (GH 47%, WAS 37%) for the few jobs available was a significant issue, which the training in the Boreal Homebuilding program directly addresses. Two students in WAS mentioned sexual harassment in other jobs. To ensure they did not experience a similar problem, we developed a sexual harassment policy with Wasagamack Employment and Training. As well, we developed a Drug and Alcohol policy with WAS to provide solutions to approach what students recognized as a

barrier for their success.



Future employment goals of Boreal Homebuilding Students in Garden Hill First Nation (n=12; left) and Wasagamack First Nation (n=11, right)

