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**Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership Winter Ice Road  
2020 Newsletter**

## Homebuilders Set to Finish Home this Winter

Getting the whole crew out every day resulted in substantial academic progress and homebuilding accomplishments. Walls and roofs were erected in Wasagamack before December and now they are shingling in January. In Garden Hill, they have all the walls framed but had issues with the cement mixer that were not their fault but a break in the contractor's equipment. Now Garden Hill has poured their foundation and can put up the walls like a kit.

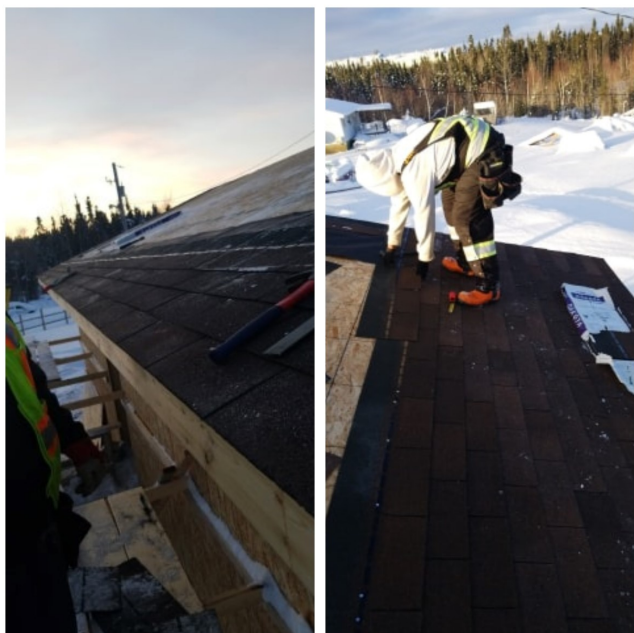


Image 1: Wasagamack beat extreme weather to finish the project builds.



Image 2, 3: The exterior of the Wasagamack's project build is almost

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### Many Perfect Attendance Awards

To appreciate the effort that students put in Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders (MB Homebuilders) project the partnership organized Christmas dinner in both communities where students and their loved ones sat down as a family unit and celebrated the arrival of Holiday seasons. In our busy life getting everyone together for a meal is a great challenge and our students took full advantage of the Christmas dinner that allowed them to sit, talk, and spent some quality time with friends and families.

The students also received 'Perfect Attendance Certificates' and awards on that evening. The Partnership put a pilot program in place in the month of November and December 2019, where students doubled their training allowance with perfect attendance each week. The pilot program intended to provide some additional support to the students before the holiday seasons but also as an incentive to get them working and learning long days doing carpentry in the freezing cold.



Image 1: Garden Hill trainees receiving awards and certificates from their instructor Bryce Wood

In total, 25 students, 13 from Garden Hill (GH) and 12 from Wasagamack (WAS), received a total of \$22,100 as bonus (\$13,350 for GH and \$8,750 for WAS). Congratulation to all of them. Three students, Derrick McPherson, Sherman Beardy from GH, and Brandon Harper from WAS received 'Outstanding Attendance Certificate' and a bonus of \$1650, \$1500, and \$1200 respectively on top of their regular training allowance for their exceptional attendance in the past two months.



complete.



Image 4: Morning theory learning session in Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders classroom.

Rather than only a stipend, providing a bonus for showing up all day every day for the week to work in the freezing cold helped get people working. There were lots of in-class education programming by Jide Oni and Darryl Wastesicoot as well as Larry Harper in Wasagamack and Bryce Wood in Garden Hill. These students are taking carpentry school very seriously and gearing up to take exams. Huge credit also goes to the coaches/teachers of MB Homebuilders students being solidly there on time with such excellent communication to students as well as Ernie Harper from Wasagamack Employment Training and Miranda from Garden Hill providing the materials. With both good instruction/mentorship and materials, this program is really turning around. Kudos to these excellent MB Homebuilder students working long days, every day in the cold and coming ready to learn. You are inspiring.



Image 5: Proud students in front of the newly built staircase at Garden Hill.

Article: Dr. Shirley Thompson and A M Rezwanul Hoque.  
Image courtesy: Babajide Oni, Folarin Solademi and Brian Saulnier.

### Where is Apprenticeship's Inclusivity? Hopefully in First Nations Sooner than Later

R.B. Russell Vocational High School's apprenticeship programs and teachers demonstrate the great potential for trades education in school to improve student success. Adam Knott, the Director of Wasagamack Education Authority with Dr. Shirley Thompson, toured the school with the informative vice-principal. The tour showcased the apprenticeship level woodshop, welding workshop, and cooking kitchen/restaurant, showing students engaging in learning carpentry, welding technology, and culinary arts. The Health Care aide program, horticulture & landscaping program, and the childcare assistant program was also of interest. So many vocational programs are in play at R.B. School, including hairstyling and printing. Adam remarked that apprenticeship and vocational programs are needed for his new school in Wasagamack as many students like hands-on work and learn best that way. Adam could see more people achieving their grade 12 diploma with these types of programs. Apprenticeship programs in secondary school would also provide a good stepping stone for a job too. Students at RB Russell can work up to their welding ticket and get hired without apprenticing as a skilled well-paid worker.



Image 2: Derrick McPherson was outstanding in the worksite and maintained perfect attendance in last 2 months. He received \$1500 in total on top of his regular training allowance.



Image 3: Garden Hill MB Homebuilders trainees at their Christmas appreciation dinner.



Image 4: Wasagamack trainees with their instructor Phillender Harper posing before their Christmas dinner.





Image 1: Adam Knott, Education Director, Wasagamack Education Authority at R.B. Russell Vocational high school.



Image 2: Thanks for your amazing tour of R.B. Russell Vocational high school. Apprenticeship at your school rocks.



Image 3: Students are receiving hands on training at R.B. Russell Vocational high school.

Some hopeful news for training and apprenticeships in Wasagamack. The assessment process that was planned with Workplace Education Manitoba happened in December 2019. This assessment had been planned to occur for early January 2018 as documented in proposals ([see attached](#)) and so was two years delayed – but better late than never. The Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership has had rich discussions with WEM and Apprenticeship Manitoba over many years and submitted many proposals in 2017 with plans that they would provide funding and programming starting in Winter 2018. And something finally happened. Kudos. Although two years later we are hopeful that reconciliation can and is occurring. This is progress and the Mino Bimaadiziwin partnership have been actively advocating for Workplace Education Manitoba service delivery for First



Image 5: Lots of traditional foods to celebrate the festivity.

Article: Dr. Shirley Thompson and A M Rezwanul Hoque.  
Image courtesy: Babajide Oni, Folarin Solademi and Brian Saulnier.

### Kudos to the Excellent Work of Students and Partners: Certificates are Piling-up

Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders (MB Homebuilders) are not only learning in the classroom and on the job to log, forest, saw, and build housing these students are gaining lots of certifications. 295 certificates were awarded to all the students involved in the program after completing successfully the following courses: Wilderness First Aid or Standard First Aid Course, Job Readiness, Small Motors Course, Chainsaw Operation Course, Lumber Grading Course, Basic Occupational Health & Safety Training course, Working at Heights Course, Lockout Tag-out, Forestry management 1 & 2 and WHIMIS 2015. See students' achievement in figure 1

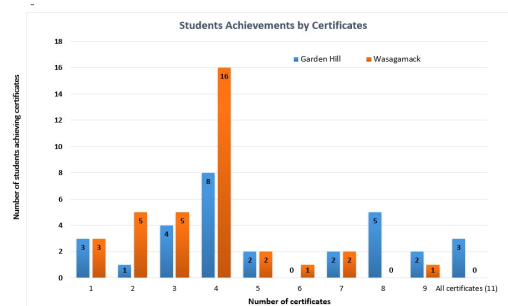


Figure 1: Students achievement by certificates.

Overall, 69 students, 34 students from GH, 35 students from WAS, and 5 students from other programs got one or more certificates as part of the MB Homebuilders program. Garden Hill has three students who got all the 11 certificates.

The Mino Bimaadiziwin partnership provides Island Lake students with a training allowance of approximately \$1000/month from October 2018 until the end of March 2020, when students are attending and registered in the program full-

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Nations as well as Apprenticeship programs in schools ([see letters and meeting minutes](#))

Programs delayed are programs denied - many youth had no opportunities for community training related to apprenticeship. But if we can learn from this failure and make things happen in a timely way in the future all is not lost.



Image 4: All the partners discussing the necessity and possibility of apprenticeship programs in secondary school in Garden Hill and Wasagamack .

After a meeting in November 2019, a new feasible plan is being drafted regarding apprenticeship. Newly formed Mitik 299 Corp., a housing and sawmill company, will start with two apprenticeships under the manager Larry Wood's Red Seal by filling out the forms. Mitik will get further ones under Apprenticeship Trainers and then eventually Red Seal trades people. The director of education for Wasagamack applying for apprenticeship programs in his school. Hopefully, Workplace Education Manitoba will have something to offer to.

Apprenticeship Manitoba (AM) coordinates trades certification and training to generate industry-standard workforce and community engagement through employment. The Strategic Apprenticeship Plan 2018 – 2023 identified a need to diversify the workforce to include Indigenous people with four key goals; i. Inclusive and Engaging, ii. Innovation and Quality, iii. Access and Success, and iv. Responsive and Accountable. The "Apprenticeship and Certification Board 2017-2018 Annual Report" mentions that in the 2017-2018 year, only 12% of the apprentices were women and Indigenous participation was only at 10% but mentions it has no success story to tell of Indigenous apprentice or journey-person. Let's change that story in Wasagamack and Garden Hill First Nations and other First Nations but we need everyone's help and best efforts.

Article and Image Courtesy: [Dr. Shirley Thompson](#).

time. The partnership grant is geared to focus on helping students, and so 80% of the grant money goes to Island lake students. A total of \$721,446 was spent on MB Homebuilders students as training allowance, bonus, and other expenses up until January 15, 2020.

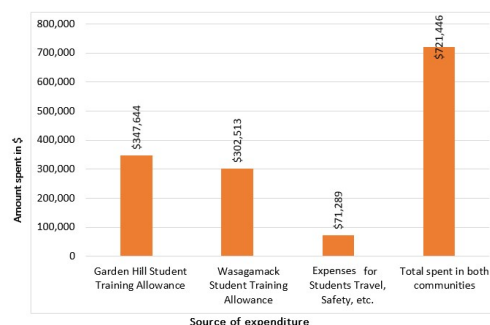


Figure 2: Spending in training allowance and other expenses in Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations

In addition, \$71,289 was spent on Island Lake students' career developments, travel, and conferences. Five students from Island Lake attended a two days Proposal Writing Workshop at the University of Manitoba in March 2019 and learned how to develop funding proposals ([See their presentation](#)). As well, eleven students from Wasagamack also attended a week long program visiting architecture studios, alternative building village, chemistry and sustainable green housing where they gained various house building techniques of 'Net Zero' house. Furthermore, two Boreal Home Builders students, namely Roxanne Harper and Jason Knott were transported to learn how to design and build with One House Many Nation a Muskrat Hut at Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) in April 2019.

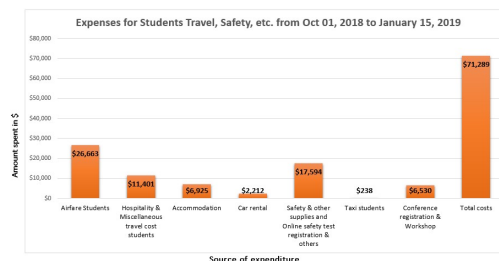


Figure 3: Expenses for students travel, safety, etc. from October 01, 2018, to January 15, 2019.

Thanks to all the students and partners for their dedication and excellent work in education and learning with the Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders program.

Article and figure courtesy: [A M Rezwanul Hoque](#)

## Home Blueprints and Interior Designs Completed

Success! The designs by Island Lake communities to be built by Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders (MB Homebuilders) students, which I then drafted into blueprints, received its engineering stamp. After a handful of meetings and many revisions over 8 months, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, these structural drawings received their engineer stamp of approval. The design included the Island Lake's peoples wishes for a wood stove, enclosed porches for both entrances to provide a transition sheltered area from outside to inside and a large living/kitchen area for holding events (funeral wakes, family gatherings, etc.). These blueprints are now in use by the 30 homebuilding students in their post-secondary education program in both Wasagamack and Garden Hill First Nations. A huge thank you to Gavin Clements, the structural engineer for KNH Sawatzky & Associates, who not only participated but mentored my learning as a Master of Interior Design student.

Indigenous design philosophy highlights the importance of embedding Indigenous culture, heritage and community vision into the design criteria and form. Unique cultural aspects of the community must be at the heart of the design process and impact the final product. Cultural aspects that I considered in my Northern home interior design were based on research and personal experiences in both Wasagamack First Nation and Opaskwayak Cree Nation. These cultural aspects include: the history, identity, relationships, ethics, spirit and morals of the land, community, family, as well as migration, resiliency and sustainability.

considered in designs by non-indigenous outsiders. To improve housing in the north, I undertook an exploration on how to create healthy, more durable homes to sustain humans living there. Sustainable and resilient consideration includes: air, water, nourishment/land and ecology as well as socioeconomic needs such as mobility, community/belonging, growth/wealth, respect, shelter/security and health. See some pictures of out floor plan in figure 1, 2 and 3.

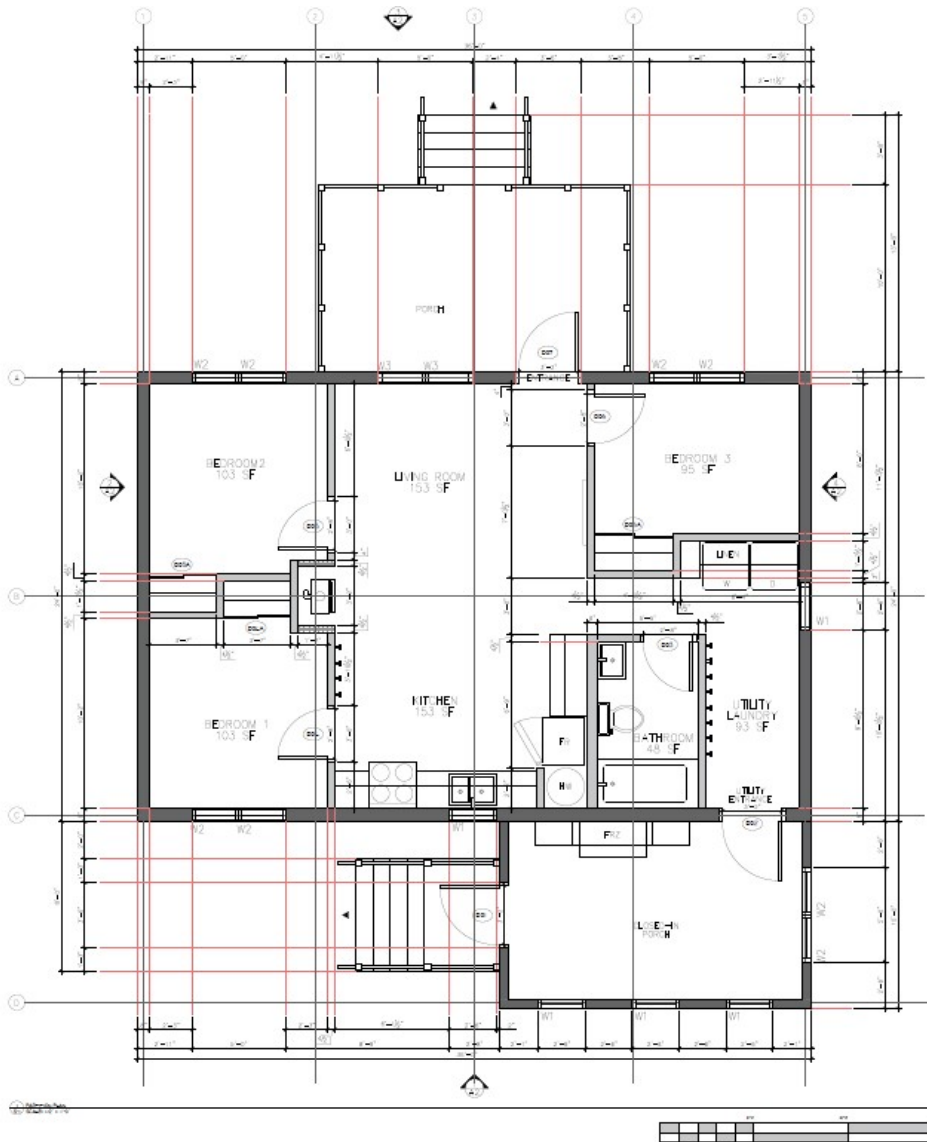


Figure 1: Interior structural plan of the building.



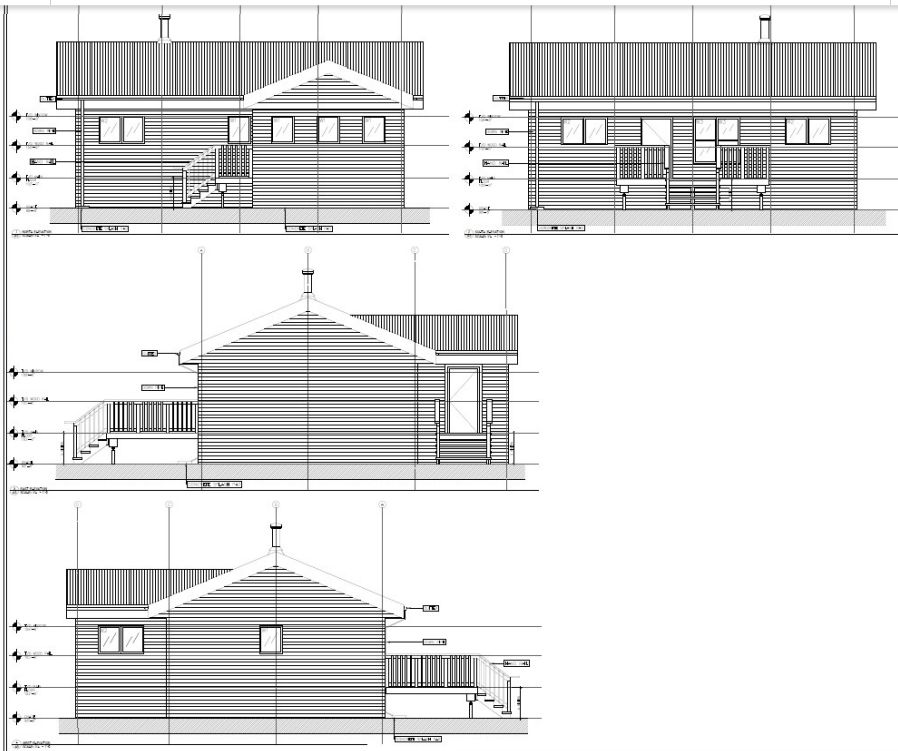


Figure 02: Outside design of the building.

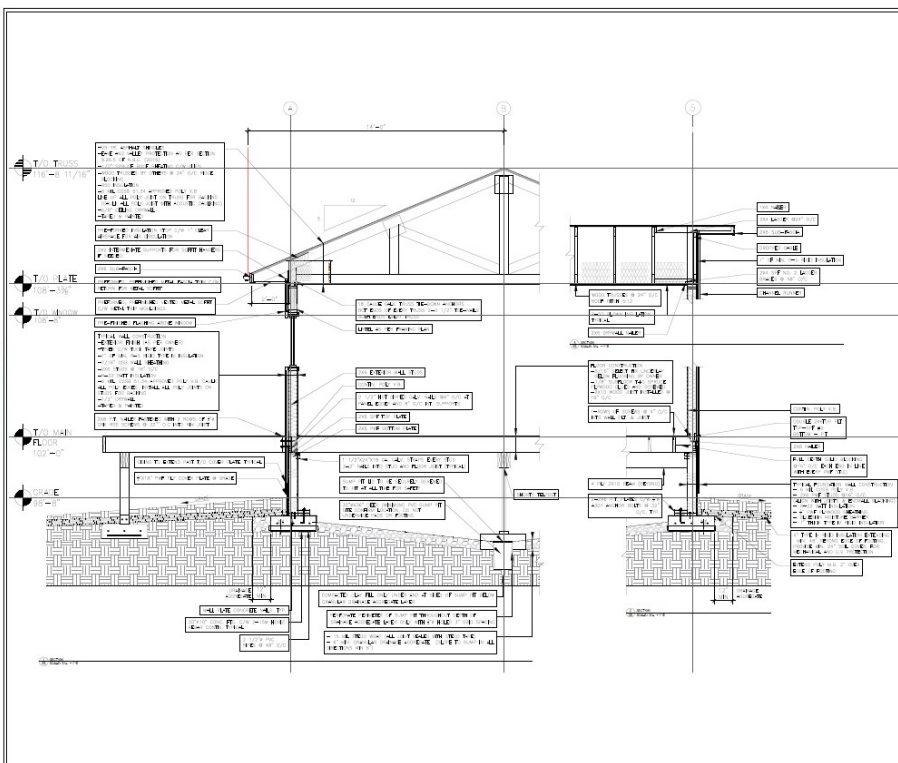


Figure 3: Foundation of the building.

Linked to these findings are how energy independence, local labour and locally sourced and processed materials help reinstate ownership and power into the community through housing. The community wants to choose their housing design solutions, and be able to implement and maintain these solutions locally. The designs were also strongly influenced by Dr. Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* book and seeing *The Honourable Harvest* lecture. The honorable harvest is an Indigenous philosophy that ensures that the gifts of Mother Earth are shared and not stolen but respected through provision of offerings back to the earth. This relationship creates reciprocity, where people sustain earth and earth sustains people.

Article and Figure by Cat Salles



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