



May 2020

Dear OIYPP supporters,

We are writing you to request a contribution in support of Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project's (OIYPP) efforts to serve Indigenous youth in Ontario. As you know, OIYPP exists to support Indigenous youth as they explore and execute ideas to help their communities thrive. We do this by meeting Indigenous youth and communities where they are at in terms of dynamic needs, aspirations and ideas. Given OIYPP's flexible approach and deep relationships with Indigenous communities in Ontario, we have seen a significant increase in requests for support to help communities adapt to COVID-19 since the crisis escalated earlier this spring.

In the past few months, COVID-19 has become an international pandemic, with Canada and the Province of Ontario taking dramatic measures to reduce the spread of the virus and protect communities and citizens. While these actions have been important to help flatten the curve, the truth is many communities, especially those that were already vulnerable, are still struggling with the social, economic, and health impacts of COVID – and will continue to do so long into the future.

We have heard from our community that in response to COVID-19, many funders have shifted their priorities to focus on traditional forms of healthcare and front-line supports. As a result, grassroots work, like the projects these youth are leading, has been de-prioritized. Yet in many of these communities, it is projects like the ones these youth are leading that will strengthen and sustain their communities as they adapt and deal with the full spectrum of impacts – from mental health to social connections to health needs.

In order to respond to unprecedented need related to COVID-19, OIYPP took measures to ensure access to small, flexible grants for Indigenous Youth, including extending the deadline to apply to OIYPP's annual granting pool, as well as opening the scope of work to include relief from the pandemic.

As a result, OIYPP received a **record breaking 33 applications** from Indigenous youth across Ontario. This is a significant increase from past years – our previous record was 26. We also saw an increase in the diversity of geographic and types of support requested, showing that a one size fits all approach will not serve Indigenous communities.

Every year, OIYPP's Youth Advisors review all the applications and select those that are Indigenous youth-led and that support their community. Of the 33 applications submitted, the **Youth Advisors selected 23 applications for funding, all of which focus on community-centered, grassroots, and youth-led work.** Of the 23 successful applicants, 18 of these applications are a direct response to COVID-19. Some examples of COVID response include food & delivery for Inuit families, beading and drumming webinars, an online running club, a documentary to discuss how an Indigenous community is dealing with the pandemic and online tutorials for medicine harvesting.

The remaining successful applications are focused on the revitalization of Indigenous culture and knowledge, and include work like doula and midwifery training; ceremony; intersectional gatherings for



Black and Indigenous communities; an Anishinaabe graphic novel; a two-spirit art show; seed harvesting and urban tobacco growing; a Metis community library and a podcast for post-secondary Indigenous students, to name a few. *A full list of all applications are below.* All of these applications are easily adaptable to meet safety precautions during the pandemic.

The current total request to OIYPP is **\$125,163.59**. Unfortunately, OIYPP does not have sufficient resources to grant to all of these projects.

In order to support all 23 qualifying applications OIYPP is working hard to raise an additional **\$50,000**. As a current partner to OIYPP, we are so grateful for the generous ways in which you support this work – both with your time and learning, as well as with your financial contributions. We know that you are some of our best allies, and that you also want this work to succeed. As a result, we are reaching out to request your thoughtful consideration of an additional one-time gift to OIYPP to support Indigenous youth in these unique times. A gift of any amount would be valuable in helping us to reach this extended \$50,000 goal.

Additionally, we are hoping to share the work of Indigenous youth and OIYPP's model with new partners, as we work hard to support all qualifying projects this year – if you know someone that you feel may have an interest in OIYPP's work, we would love to have you share some information with them, or facilitate an introduction.

Brief Summary of Successful OIYPP 2020 Applications:

1. Short film by a youth in Sioux Lookout
2. Urban medicine gardening
3. Round Dance
4. Doula Training
5. Inuk youth photography start-up
6. Anishinaabe seasonal culture and land camps (Northern ON)
7. Anishinaabe cultural and land based learning (Southern ON)
8. Urban Indigenous Youth Gathering
9. Inuktitut Classes
10. Intersectional art showcases, workshops and discussions
11. Reclaiming Indigenous Values and self-worth for youth
12. Inuit food deliveries
13. Metis community library
14. Indigenous hip hop show and music workshops
15. Podcast for post-secondary Indigenous students
16. Two Spirit Art Show
17. Online running club
18. Online Beading Classes
19. Anishinaabe Graphic Novel
20. Short documentary on how community and youth are affected by COVID19



21. Panels and talks to bring together Black and Indigenous communities
22. Online song learning from song keepers
23. Online Elders and youth knowledge exchange events

At OIYPP, we believe that communities are best suited to know their needs and to develop creative solutions to address them. During this global pandemic, it is more important than ever that we are supporting communities in ways that are appropriate and relevant to them. OIYPP's ability to support all 23 qualifying projects an additional \$50,000 will be an important step in helping Indigenous communities across Ontario respond to the pandemic and ensure they are well positioned to not just survive but also thrive as we come out on the other side of COVID-19. We hope you agree.

Miigwetch – Thank you,

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