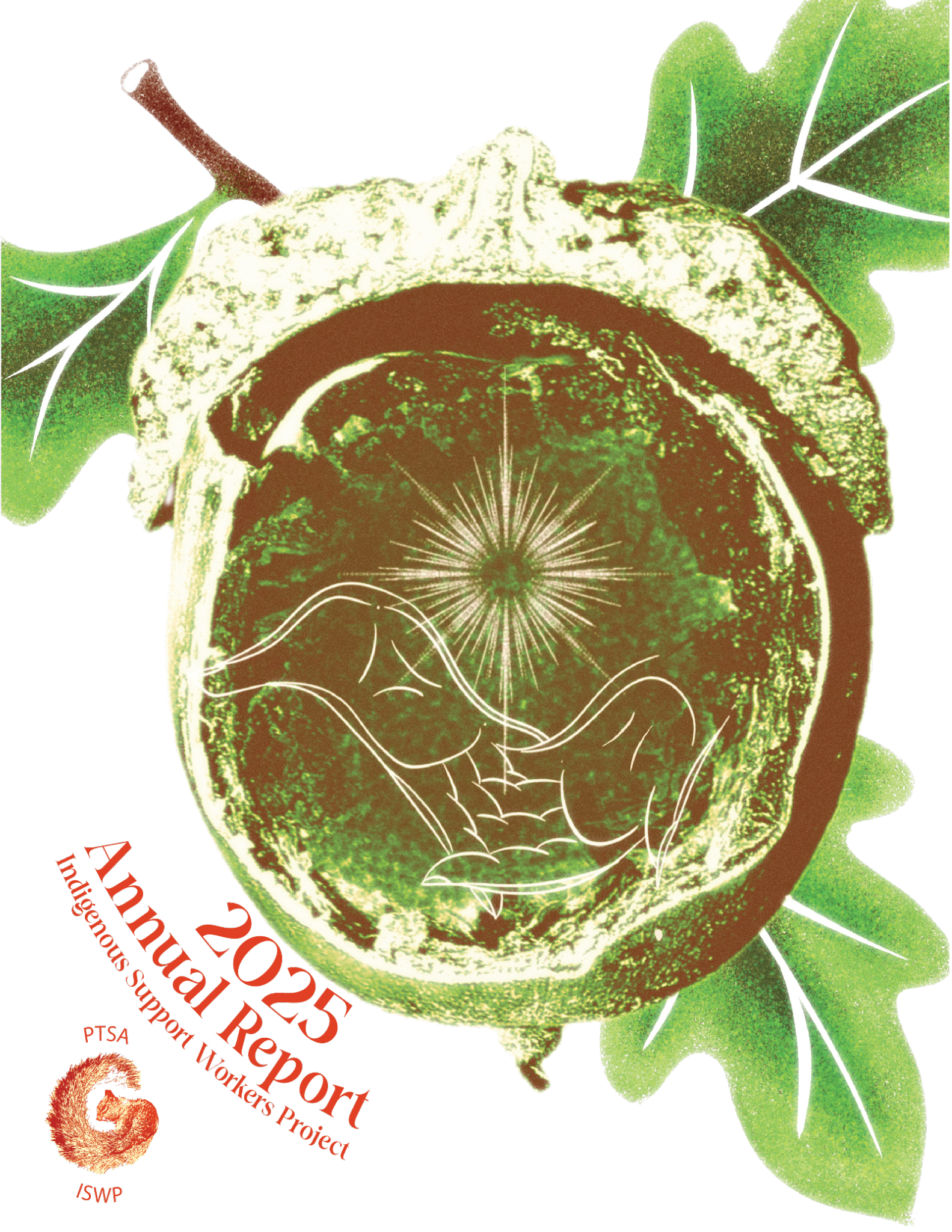
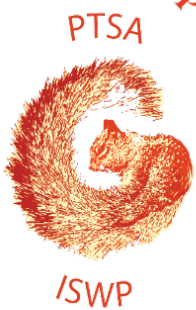




2025 Annual Report

Indigenous Support Workers Project





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Land Acknowledgement

The Indigenous Support Workers Project (ISWP) is based in Tiohtiá:ke, as it is known to the Haudenosaunee, as Mooniyang to the Anishinaabeg, and as Montreal to many others.

This traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka has also been a historical meeting place for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis nations. Today, Tiohtiá:ke is home to a diverse population of First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other peoples. We respect continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships as First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other peoples in our work, and we are grateful to live and work on this territory. The majority of ISWP's community members are Inuit and we work together to uplift each other's contributions and wisdom brought to the organization.



“I find ever since working here and there with ISWP, we’ve made a change to make people understand that they aren’t alone being homeless and it’s not wrong if they feel the way they do. A helping hand by listening and trying to be there for whom wants help.

I thank ISWP for making a mode of sort of peace on the streets. Everybody is different and even all of the world.”

- Anonymous, Peer Worker

Who We Are

Peer Community

There are too many peer community members to name individually but thank you to the many peers that have worked in the last year.

Staff

Lyn Black
Chris Brown
Molly Chamagne
Kody Crowell
Estelle Davies
Shirley DeWind
Rénee Florence
Denise Horvath
Jaimee Kopalie
Ali Lemire
Fern Marmont
Simiuni Nayua
Virginia Ribeiro
Melissa Simon
Akeeshoo Sataa
Mary Shearman
Eli Sheiner

Médecins du Monde Nursing Team

Amy Low
Lucie Vicat-Blanc
Simon Marchand

Board of Directors

Amy Edward
Joseph Gabereau
Annie Kilabuk
François-Xavier Michaux
Akeeshoo Sataa
Crystal Sharky
Eva Sharky
Melissa Simon
Maryse Swallow

External Contractors

Anna Aude
Ron Amstutz
Emily Yee Clare
Tuyaa Montgomery
Mathieu Morin-Robertson
Tealey Ka'senni:saks Normandin
Rachelle Perron
Mark Phillips
Diego Ramirez
Allison Reid
Neko Wong-Houle

“I’m proud of the team. The team has grown. The night shift is going really well and becoming really independent. There are less overdoses. We’ve come a long way, the crew is getting better, we’ve come a long way...”

- Shirley DeWind, Peer Coordinator



Mandate & Objectives

The mandate of ISWP is to center and support the well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people with lived experiences of homelessness through decolonial advocacy and revitalization practices. ISWP is committed to providing wrap-around care and fostering relationships of trust based in holistic healing and skills development to support our community members' transition to an autonomous and empowered life free from homophobia and transphobia, and other forms of structural violence. This is accomplished by providing:

- by-and-for peer services for community members and service users using a **rights-based harm reduction** approach centring Indigenous ways of being, knowing and healing
- **resources** in response to community needs
- **training and employment opportunities** for Indigenous workers with lived experience of homelessness working in the mental health, rights-based harm reduction, support work, street outreach, and/or homelessness-serving sector
- education and **training for peer organizations** and other groups that serve ISWP's community members

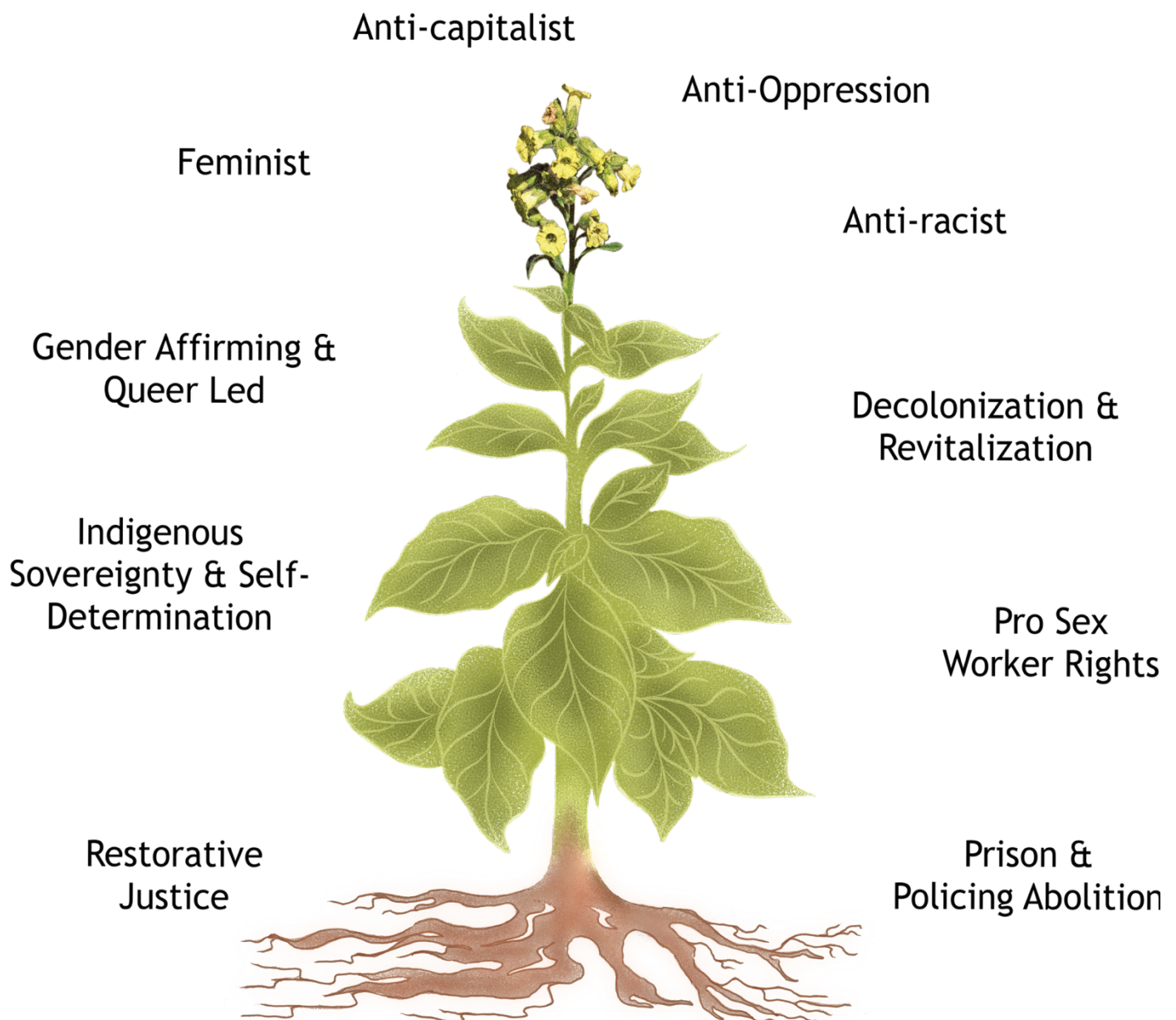
“At Tam-Tam, they [the police] call us now and we intervene, it’s way better- we get along better”

- Shirley DeWind, Peer Coordinator

Approach & Values

ISWP continues to draw inspiration from the collaborative spirit of Plateau Mont-Royal, and most importantly, directly from community members. Our work focuses on working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis community members who are at risk or in precarious situations through the presence of street workers.

Our work aims to embody the following values:



Our Story

- **Founding:** ISWP was founded in September 2019, emerging from the Homelessness Committee of the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK. Two street workers and a part-time supervisor, working on weekends and after hours to provide **physical and emotional first aid** when no other services were available.
- **First Project:** Our first community-based project was the Handwashing for Homeless stations that were operated by a network of community volunteers during the pandemic. At the time, these were the only way First Nations, Inuit and Métis people experiencing homelessness could **access hand washing facilities** while most places were closed.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** During the first lockdown of the COVID-19 Pandemic, ISWP staff were one of the few organizations that stayed active on the streets. In particular, demands around the winter holidays shifted ISWP's focus to a more peer-based approach.
- **Peer Crews:** Due to the staffing crisis and COVID-19 restrictions, ISWP **employed peers to provide services to our community**. This included a peer clean-up crew and an outreach crew. The staff team grew to around 17 employees at this time.
- **Community Space:** Until March 2022, ISWP was invited by the City of Montreal collaborating with Wapikoni Mobile to host an outdoor space for community members. Located near Mont-Royal station, this trailer became a site of connection and gathering and for **disseminating harm reduction supplies**. Other projects operating out of the trailer included:
 - Soup Social, now Sunday Lunches
 - A warming terrasse for community members
 - Providing clothing and outdoor gear

- **Incorporation:** May 10th, 2022 ISWP officially incorporated as an independent Indigenous non-profit organization with an explicit commitment to **decolonizing its governance structure** and practice.
- **First AGM:** July 30th, 2023, ISWP held its first official Annual General Meeting with a focus on making it **dynamic and accessible**. An overview of the proposed bylaws was presented for feedback from the community followed by elections, food and games!
- **Community Garden:** In Summer 2023, the community space evolved into a collective garden where ISWP participants planted traditional medicines, herbs and vegetables alongside other partners such as Salade Solidaire.
- **Launch of the Evening Shift:** In response to deadly overdoses on September 10, 2023 and requests from the community, ISWP launched a weekday evening peer outreach shift in October to provide more harm reduction education and supplies on the street when most other services are closed.
- **Additional Projects and Funding:** In 2023, ISWP secured funding from the *Secrétariat à la condition féminine* to explore the prevalence of sexual and gender-based harassment in the street community. Since that time, we have discussed how this impacts our organization and how we would like to respond. In 2025, with the support of this project we hosted our first healing circle to address these issues and will continue to make space for these important discussions in 2026. While the funding for this project will officially finish this year we will carry our learnings from this project forward into the future of ISWP.

“Everyone [in the ISWP community] is more aware of harm reduction practices.”

- Shirley DeWind, Peer Coordinator



Board Report

The 2025/26 year saw some changes on the ISWP board. Some of our board members, including those who had been with us for a few years, stepped away to pursue other interests including education. We also saw some new members of the community be elected to the board.

We are so grateful to everyone who volunteers their time to oversee the organization and wish everyone the best with their other projects and interests. We are privileged to be an inclusive board which can support participation from the community and staff representation in efforts to remain non-hierarchical.

For the 2025 AGM, we returned to the summer BBQ vibe that was introduced at our first AGM in 2023. Thanks to Eli for the delicious burgers and to Molly for overseeing the whole event.

Molly also organized quarterly Peer Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings in 2025. These meetings serve to inform the board, and board meetings, about what issues matter most to the community members on the ground and ensure fluid communication between the governance of the organization and its service users. This is just one way ISWP attempts to subvert the hierarchical bureaucracy that is implied in the set-up of non-profit organizations and operate guided by principles of decolonization and revitalization.

In addition, as ISWP has now been operating as an incorporated non-profit since 2022, we have begun to notice that some of the bylaws don't align with the realities of our communities as written, particularly those in relation to timing. As such, you can expect a review of the bylaws and changes made to ensure our membership can thrive.

As we move forward with both new and more experienced board members we look forward to continuing work in line with ISWP's mandate and objectives.

Core Activities

Weekend Activities

Guided by Shirley, Jaimee and Molly, ISWP's Outreach Team continues to attend **weekly Tam-Tam festivals** on Sundays in order to support our community and prevent targeted surveillance.

Melissa continued to host **delicious Sunday Lunches** served with a whole lot of heart. On any given Sunday, 15-50 community members will attend and any remaining meals will be distributed to those who couldn't be present.

Weeknight Overdose Prevention Team

ISWP's overdose prevention team were on the street to respond to the increasing number of overdoses impacting the community. This endeavour was headed by Shirley, Kody, Simiuni and Chris.

Through this initiative, community members also access harm reduction education and traditional medicines in addition to various harm reduction supplies during every shift. These supplies include those designed for safer sex, safer smoking, safer injection, and Naloxone (to reverse an opioid overdose). With the expansion of the program, harm reduction supplies are distributed 7 days a week, all year round.

In June 2025 the first harm reduction workshop with peers was hosted as part of this program. The team recorded 1935 interactions with community members on the street between February 3 and November 18, 2025. During this time period, the team distributed 634 safe inhalation kits, averaging roughly 7 kits per night. The first walk-along with a prominent health-care professional in the community happened in December 2025. It was considered successful and eye-opening and has generated much interest among other health-care providers who wish to learn more about the realities of our community. For more information about this ISWP project specifically, see the December 2025 Project Report.

Peer Employment Opportunities

ISWP is committed to providing community members with accessible employment opportunities as the entry point to meaningful engagement with community leadership. Individuals rotate shifts so that a wider range of people can access both the experience and income.

- The Saturday Peer Crew consists of 4 people per shift.
- The Sunday Outreach Peer Team engages 2 people per shift.
- The Evening Outreach Peer Team comprises 3 people per shift.
- There were **728 unique employment opportunities** for peers throughout the 2025 fiscal year.

Organized Activities

Our social animators plan weekly activities for our community members, including Sunday Lunches. This project has been instrumental in building community, having fun, and encouraging connection between peers.

- There have been approximately **75 weekly organized activities** of about **15-20 participants** each.
- Activities included watching movies in theatres, going to the Verdun beach, hosting BBQs, going to museums, a walking club, attending festivals, and a carving workshop.
- The group also participated in several Art Hives and attended the Powwow in Kahnawà:ke.
- Our Easter Egg Hunt had close to **50 participants!**

Nurse Program

In partnership with Medicines du Monde (MdM), ISWP hosted two street nurses to provide street based nursing services to community members on weekends.

In addition to the regular presence of nurses, former ISWP staff member, Simon Marchand, went on to work with MdM as a health navigator accompanying the nurses because of his familiarity and experience with the ISWP community.

Health Navigator Program

Long-time member of the ISWP community Akeeshoo Sataa is our current health navigator. Akeeshoo escorts other community members to emergency and planned medical appointments. Akeeshoo supports and witnesses community members in their interactions with healthcare providers, facilitates a culturally safe environment, provides a familiar face during all sorts of procedures and generally responds to whatever a community member may need when interacting with the healthcare system.

Acknowledgements

Partners

Centre for Community Organizations
Comité Citoyen.ne.s de Milton-Parc
CREMIS
Exeko
First Peoples' Justice Centre of Montreal
Inuit Siqinirmiut Quebecmi Ilaujut/Southern Quebec Inuit Association
Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK
Médecins du Monde
Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
Native Montreal
Plein Milieu
Projet Autochtones du Québec

Funders

Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program
Direction des services généraux et des partenariats urbains, Centre
intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-
l'Île-de-Montréal
Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK
Secrétariat à la condition féminine

Illustrations & Design by Priya Choudhuri (@sirhealism)
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