
GIDINAWENDIMIN

GIDINAWENDIMIN SEPTEMBER 18, 2026 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2027

Developed under the guidance and leadership of **e wiindmaagzijig,** a circle of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and language teachers, this exhibition honours the beauty, depth, and resilience of Michi Saagiig culture.

ARTISTS & EXHIBIT TEAM

Motion Graphics Designer & Editor: James Monkman Design – James Monkman
Mixed Media Artist: Sue Allen-Forget
Exhibition Design: Entro – Rob Daly, Edmund Li, Irene Chalmers
Lighting Design: LightFactor – Alexander Tougas
Composer & Sound Designer: Nagamo Publishing – Nigel Irwin
Media Integration: National Show Systems – Rob Sandolowich, Chas Christensen
Exhibition Fabrication & Installation: Holman – Ayelet Lustgarten, Conor Yakutchik, Raudel Hernandez, Iva Dulanovic, Ed Trenkl
NCAM: Katie Kennedy, Abigail Miller, Taylor Little, Lillie Donovan

Special thanks to Elder Rita Rose, Dean Smith, Ryan Gray-Brady, Florence Osawamick, Kaylee Mae Muskrat, Kelli Marshall, Mkons Stone-Debassige, and Tina Cole and Alderville First Nation Daycare for sharing their songs.

MIIGWECH

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Northumberland County Archives and Museum is on the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations.

Northumberland County Archives and Museum | 2-590 Courthouse Rd., Cobourg, ON K9A 5J6
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Mnaadendanowdaa iw ntam giigdowin omaa akiing, gaa noondmowaad mewzha minwaa noogom.

Megwaa gnwaabdamon iw ewaajigaademgak, gdaa noondaan anishinaabemlowin omaa nbiing, maamaajiwaad giw mtigoog minwaa nookiinoonwin biimskaawsing. Entaagwak niw kidwinan g'gaa wiindaamaagon nake ezhi aabjitoong niw ji mnotaagwak.

Gidinawendimin zhinkademgad kina nwendiyang, mii iw nake Anishnaabeg omaa endajig entaagziwaad.

Nooji goji ntemgad iw Anishinaabemowin. Mii nake ezhi bmaadziyang omaa akiing.

Wdi niigaanbidoonaawaa iw kina giw egiidojig, iw ewaabjigaademgak gdi nsitaagoo noojigoji. Aapchi gonaa mshkowziimgad minwaa gnaajiwag giw kinaa mewzha gaa daajig omaa akiing, aanwi go bekaanak kidwinan aabjitchigaademgak omaa akiing.

Kinaa da a'aapttonmaading kina niw Niizhwaaswi Mishoomsinaan kinoomaagewnan ji mkendamong e owyang, ge ji mwkendmagid gdanwendaagninaanig minwaa iw aki.



Honour the first words spoken on this land, heard thousands of years ago and today.

Led by local Indigenous voices, this exhibit celebrates how language connects nature, culture, and spirituality. It reflects the strength and beauty of the people who have always lived here, and the diversity of Anishinaabemowin dialects present in this area today.

Gidinawendimin means “we are all related” in Michi Saagiig, the traditional dialect of Anishinaabemowin spoken by the Michi Saagiig people of this region.

The language is all around us. It is the culture and way of being in the world.

As you journey through the exhibit, the language is carried in the flow of water, the rustle of trees, and the turning of seasons. Experience how sounds awaken words, and words weave into phrases.

Together they share the Seven Grandfather Teachings reminding us of our ties to one another, the ancestors, and this land.



THE CREATION OF GIDINAWENDIMIN

The Michi Saagiig are the traditional people of the north shore of Michi Saagi'igan (Lake Ontario) and its tributaries. The Michi Saagiig have lived here for thousands of years. The first exhibit at Northumberland County Archives and Museum honours this history and ongoing relationships.

In 2019, local Indigenous leaders passionate about language revitalization formed a circle called e wiindmaagzijig ("those who give advice") to shape the exhibit vision. Through years of consultation, they shared what Michi Saagiig means to them. Award-winning exhibition designers and artists worked alongside the circle to bring that vision to life.

Over six years, every idea and decision was shaped through consultation and collaboration. Local Indigenous artists, Knowledge Keepers, Elders, designers, and language speakers contributed artwork, recordings, stories, songs, and perspectives that will remain with the community long after the exhibition concludes.

Michi Saagiig is the local dialect of Anishinaabemowin, part of the Ojibwe language family that connects back to the earliest inhabitants of this land. Each community speaks in ways that reflect its distinct culture and identity. Related dialects are also heard throughout this region as families relocate and language teachers share their knowledge. Gidinawendimin reflects this living diversity through the voices and dialects heard throughout the exhibition.

When governments suppress a language, especially by targeting children in schools, it is a deliberate attempt to erase the culture carried within it. As this continues to happen around the world, speaking and preserving at-risk languages remains critically important.

Northumberland County Archives and Museum is humbled to offer the first welcome to the new archives and museum with Michi Saagiig words.



E WIINDMAAGZIJIG

''THOSE WHO GIVE ADVICE''

CHRIS BEAVER



Alderville First Nation, Senior Media Advocacy Specialist, Chiefs of Ontario

Chris Beaver is Anishinaabe from Alderville First Nation, a father of two, and a media professional working with the Chiefs of Ontario, where he supports communications and public advocacy initiatives. With a background in documentary storytelling, he has created and led projects that centre Indigenous voices and perspectives, including NDN POV and The Art of Sovereignty podcast. His work is rooted in narrative sovereignty, cultural integrity, and community-informed storytelling, with a focus on sharing stories in ways that feel honest, responsible, and grounded in lived experience.

TOM COWIE



Hiawatha First Nation, First Nation Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Eagle Staff Carrier, Consultation Indigenous Knowledge Lead

Tom Cowie is a prominent figure within the Hiawatha First Nation, serving as Community Consultation/Land and Resources and as The Indigenous Knowledge Lead at Hiawatha. He is a Veteran, pipe carrier, Knowledge sharer, and Community Eagle staff carrier, dedicated to protecting environmental issues, lands, water, resources, archaeological issues, treaty and inherent rights in the community, and traditional territory. He is recognized for his knowledge in aboriginal culture and his commitment to preserving the Michi Saagiig language, traditions, and treaty lands for generations to come. During his free time, he spends meaningful moments with his family while deepening his cultural knowledge, participating in ceremonies, and learning about traditional history.

MELODY CROWE



Alderville First Nation Elder and Knowledge Keeper, Eagle Feather Carrier, Aandeg Productions, KPRDSB First Nation Education Liaison

She has devoted her life to preserving and sharing the richness of Ojibwe language, culture, and teachings. As First Nation Education Liaison with the KPR District School Board since 2001, Melody has played a vital role in transforming education, bringing Indigenous knowledge, truth, and lived experience into classrooms, guiding both students and educators toward deeper understanding and meaningful reconciliation. Guided by her deep love and reverence for her Ancestors, Melody carries her teachings with pride and purpose. She speaks to honour those who've walked before us, those who walk beside us today, and to those generations yet to come.

KIM LAMOTHE



Knowledge Keeper, Cultural Resource Coordinator, Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre

Proud mother, kokum, Nokomis, and grandmother, Kim is of mixed Anishinaabe/Métis ancestry from Longlac #58 in northwestern Ontario. Raised by her grandparents, including her grandmother, a residential school survivor, she has dedicated her life to healing and understanding the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. Educated through both formal learning and lived experience, Kim is passionate about promoting Indigenous ways of being, culture, and history across Turtle Island. She has over 40 years of experience working with and for First Nation communities. Kim lives in the City of Peterborough and is the Cultural Resource Coordinator at the Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre. Every morning is a new day to go forward on this life journey.

LIZ OSAWAMICK



Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Indigenous Studies, Trent University, President, Anishinaabemowin Teg

Elizabeth (Liz) Osawamick is an Ojibwe/Odawa Anishnaabe Midewiwin-Kwe and a proud member of Wikwemikong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island. She is a Traditional Knowledge Carrier, Water Walker, Jingle Dress Dancer, and Associate Professor of Indigenous Traditional Knowledges at Trent University. An Ontario Certified Teacher since 1996, she has dedicated her career to sharing Indigenous language, culture, arts, and pedagogy with learners of all ages. As President of Anishnaabemowin Teg, she leads efforts to preserve and revitalize Anishinaabemowin, bringing the heart, spirit, and living knowledge of the Anishinaabe people into every teaching.

ELIZABETH STONE



Founder, Mishiikehn Consulting

Liz Stone, Anishnaabekwe, Mishiikehn dodem miinwa Aamjiwnaang nDoonjibaa, is a dedicated Indigenous leader and community advocate with a strong commitment to strengthening First Nation governance, community development, and cultural revitalization. Through her work, she has consistently championed opportunities that support the well-being, growth, and self-determination of Indigenous communities. A passionate advocate for Anishinaabemowin, Liz promotes language preservation and revitalization as an essential foundation of cultural identity, knowledge, and connection. She is recognized for building meaningful relationships, fostering collaboration, and inspiring positive change while honouring Anishinaabe values, traditions, and the voices of future generations.

ANNE TAYLOR



Curve Lake First Nation, Indigenous Education Advisor, PVNC Catholic District School Board

MaangKwan ndi'zhinikaaz. Ngig ndo'odem. Wshkiigmong Curve Lake ndo'njibaa. Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe Kwe nda'aw. I am an Anishinaabemowin warrior. I am connected to our mother, the earth. I care for the water. I am a daughter, granddaughter, mother, grandmother, auntie and cousin. I am connected to those who are more than human, those ones that swim, those who walk with four legs, those who crawl and the fliers. My family is my breath of life. I follow the traditional teachings and instructions, innaaknigewin. I am an Indigenous Education Advisor for PVNCCDSB. I also occasionally sit as an Elder/Knowledge Holder in the Indigenous Peoples Court.



Sue Allen-Forget, Dbaadendizwin/Humility. 2025. Diorama constructed from cut manila file folders.



ARTISTS

JAMES MONKMAN

Motion Graphics Designer & Editor, James Monkman Design

Mr. Monkman is a Cree Motion Graphics Designer and Editor. Growing up in Winnipeg, MB, Mr. Monkman often found himself in two worlds - one foot in western culture and the other in Indigenous culture. Having this duality of perspective has helped him understand how to communicate through design in a more effective and versatile way. Mr. Monkman's work is diverse and covers a breadth of digital and tactile mediums, including live experience design, animation, and motion design, as well as textile and furniture prints. In his work he explores concepts in traditional Indigenous thought, language, and cosmology in his pursuit of creating a forward looking aesthetic that illustrates how imperative the Indigenous perspective is in our rapidly evolving Canadian culture.

NIGEL IRWIN



Composer & Sound Designer

Nigel Irwin is a Cree-Canadian musician, composer, and storyteller from Niagara Treaty territory with family ties to Enoch Cree Nation. As Creative Director of Nagamo, he helped build the first production music library entirely created by Indigenous artists. Nigel composes original scores for film, television, and immersive experiences, weaving soundscapes that bring Indigenous stories to life.

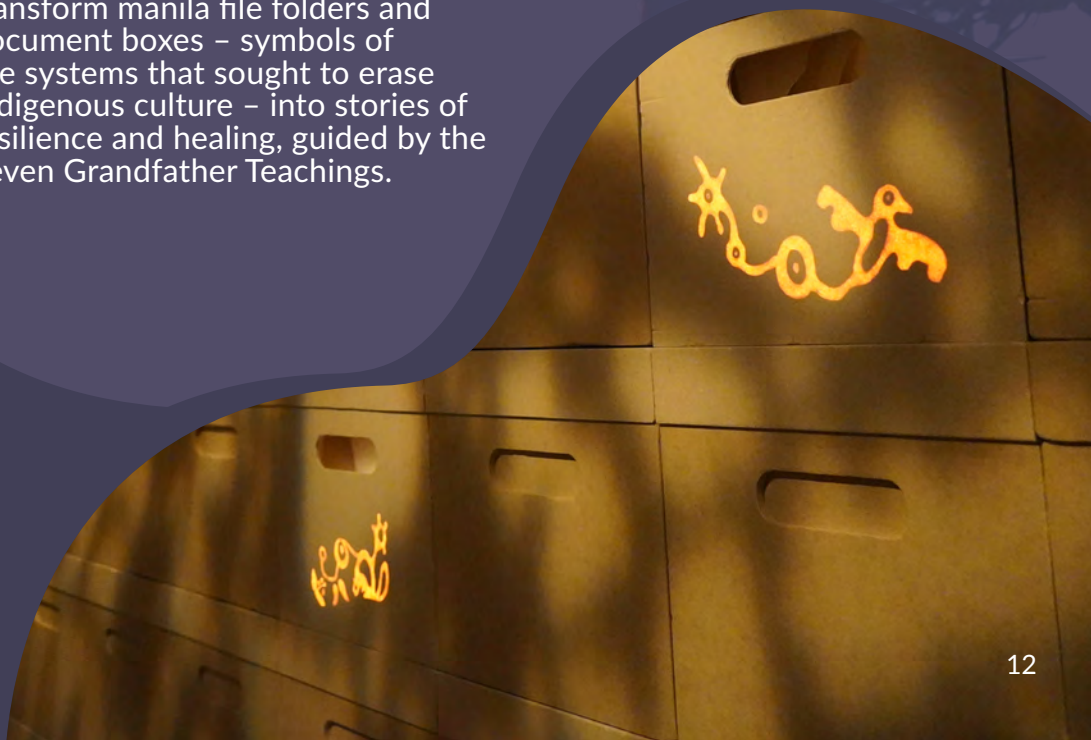
SUE ALLEN-FORGET



Mixed Media Artist

Sue Allen-Forget, is a Cree artist from Muskrat Dam First Nations, born in Thunder Bay and adopted at birth. Growing up on a farm near Colborne, Sue's adoptive mother was very artistic as well as most of her family members. After high school, Sue enrolled at The Ontario College of Art in Toronto where she studied drawing, painting and sculpture. Later on, Sue earned her degree in Fine Arts and decided to further her education at Trent University for Indigenous studies where she was immersed in Indigenous culture. Sue returned to Northumberland County to raise two children on a rural property close to her original homestead in Cramahe. Sue has contributed to many local art events and collaborations, including painting a large wall mural for the students of Colborne Public School and is part of the Indigenous Arts Collective.

Sue's intricately cut dioramas transform manila file folders and document boxes – symbols of the systems that sought to erase Indigenous culture – into stories of resilience and healing, guided by the Seven Grandfather Teachings.



ARTIST STATEMENT

“This project is very close to my heart. Working with everyone involved has been a truly beautiful experience, and it has been an honour to learn from the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who have guided the spirit and direction of this installation. Without their leadership, this work would not have been possible...

In our process, we wanted to create spaces that invite people to slow down, to breathe, and to truly observe the environments around them...

This is also why we chose to use the latest technology to share this experience. It helps illuminate how our languages and teachings reveal an interconnected reality that modern science is only beginning to articulate. The knowledge of our ancestors is not behind us; it is the way forward. Preserving our languages is essential to ensuring that the richness of our cultures lives on for our future ancestors.”

—James Monkman
Exhibition Motion Graphics Designer & Editor

“This resilience theme to me reminds me of our recovery as a culture despite many past injustices to our people. It is our perseverance through hardships, such as residential schools. It is our love and respect for the land knowing all things are bound together. We are still here, proud of who we are and proud to be Native...

I am so grateful to be a part of this project. I feel more connected to our Native Community. Happy and Proud. Blessed by the Creator for having this project cross my path.”

—Sue Allen-Forget
Mixed Media Artist

BIINDIGEN

WELCOME, COME IN



Slow down...breathe...as you circle through the exhibition, see and hear the language all around you.

BIMAADIZI

THE LANGUAGE IS ALIVE



Spring light falls across a blossoming forest. A rattle shakes… zhiishigwan…the first sounds of Creation. The language is as alive as the swirling stream. **Makwa** emerges to drink, followed by her playful cubs. They wrestle and chase after her over the stones. **Mshiikenh** slips quietly into the pond. She'll soon be looking for a place to lay her eggs. See the ferns and medicines through the morning mist, hear birds calling, and dragonflies moving above the water. These are all teachings carried from Mother earth.

Shhh… shhh… zhiishigwan biindigeg

MIIKAWAADIZI

THE LANGUAGE IS BEAUTIFUL



The water's edge is lush in the early summer sun. Bulrushes surround the bank. **Mshkode-bizhiki** strides to the cool water. He drinks and lifts his head. The water dripping from his chin and belly sends ripples through the still water. A flock of blackbirds fly by as clouds holding rain drift across the sky. The wind blows the maple leaves overhead. As we stay looking out at the beauty surrounding the shore, **amik** raises his head above the water. He swims along and dives, working to reinforce his home.

GII-PAASHKIJIISIJIGEYAN

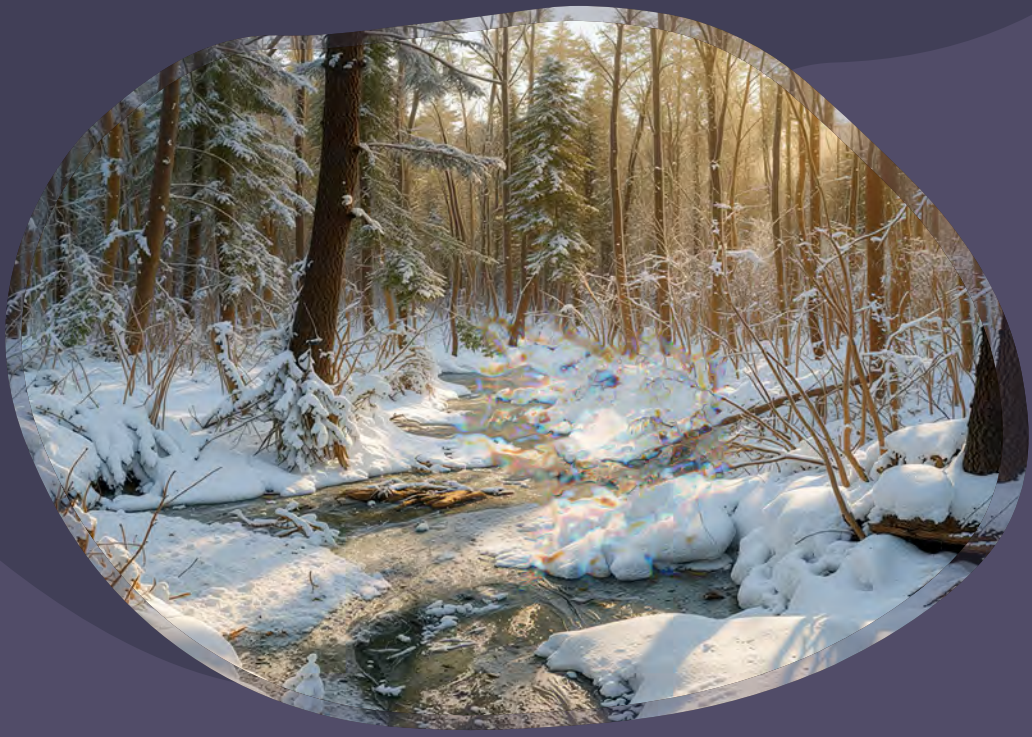
THE LANGUAGE IS RESILIENT



The colours of fall beckon as **ma'iingan, makwa, migizi** and **amik** return to the water, each bringing their own teachings. Listen for the cry of **migizi**, the gnawing of **amik**, the rustle of leaves. Turning the corner, leaves of paper hover overhead. Walls of document boxes evoke the government systems and legislation designed to erase Indigenous culture. Protected within the language are teachings of resilience. Listen to the children's voices and the songs of Elders that bring comfort and medicine.

MNO BIMAADIZIWIN

THE LANGUAGE IS HEALING



Winter sets in the forest. Snow blankets the trees. The sun, though it's weak, plays with the shadows. **Ma'iingan** scratches at the ice and has a drink of that cold, clear water. His breath can be seen in the cold. We see older brother **msaabe** coming through the woods. The birds have traveled south, but there is still so much life. As we stand here listening to the silence of the forest we hear the voices of Elders, Knowledge carriers, and young ones, sharing the 7 Grandfather Teachings.



THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS



MSHIIKENH TURTLE

DEBWEWIN

TRUTH

“Ka-debswentaanaa wii debwe’ing miinwaa pane wii-kidyeng ezhi-debweying. Debwe’endan debwewin mii dash ji-kenman ezhi-mshkoozlimgak.”

“Live by the truth and always tell the truth, believe in truth and you will know its power.”

Speakers: Elder Rita Rose, Kaylee Mae Muskrat

GWEKWAADZIWIN

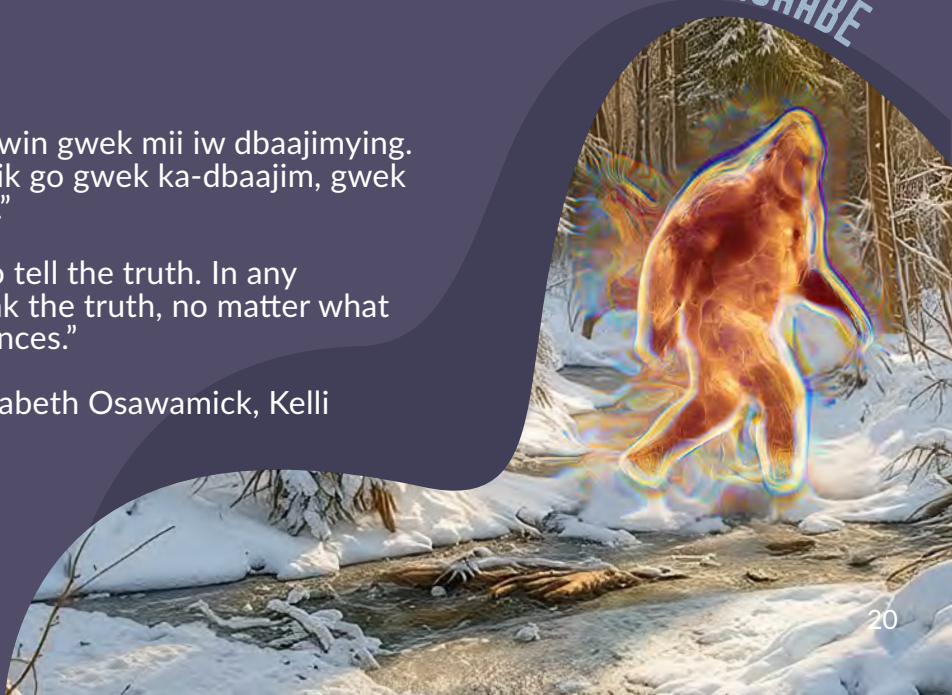
HONESTY

“Gwekwaadziwin gwek mii iw dbaajimying. Menj go wii dik go gwek ka-dbaajim, gwek ka-dbaajmimi.”

“Honesty is to tell the truth. In any situation speak the truth, no matter what the consequences.”

Speakers: Elizabeth Osawamick, Kelli Marshall

MSAABE





MA'IINGAN WOLF

DBAADENDIZWIN

HUMILITY

"Dbaadendizwin aabdig kwii-bgidnaan miinwaa pii nenman wi-mji'il miinwaa shkaadenmod noojgway bmaadzid."

"Humility is the ability to forgive and forget so we can let go of the arrogance and hatred that divides all the races."

Speakers: Elizabeth Osawamick, Florence Osawamick

MNAADENDMOWIN

RESPECT

"Mnaadendmowin naadendmowi Mno-doodoo ge'ek aanind bemaadizijig, ka mino-doodaagog dash gegii Mnaadendan akl enaaniibwetaadimon."

"Treat others the way you want to be treated. Treat the land you stand on with respect."

Speakers: Elder Rita Rose, Kaylee Mae Muskrat



MSHKODE-BIZHIKI BUFFALO



AMIK BEAVER

NBWAAKAAWIN

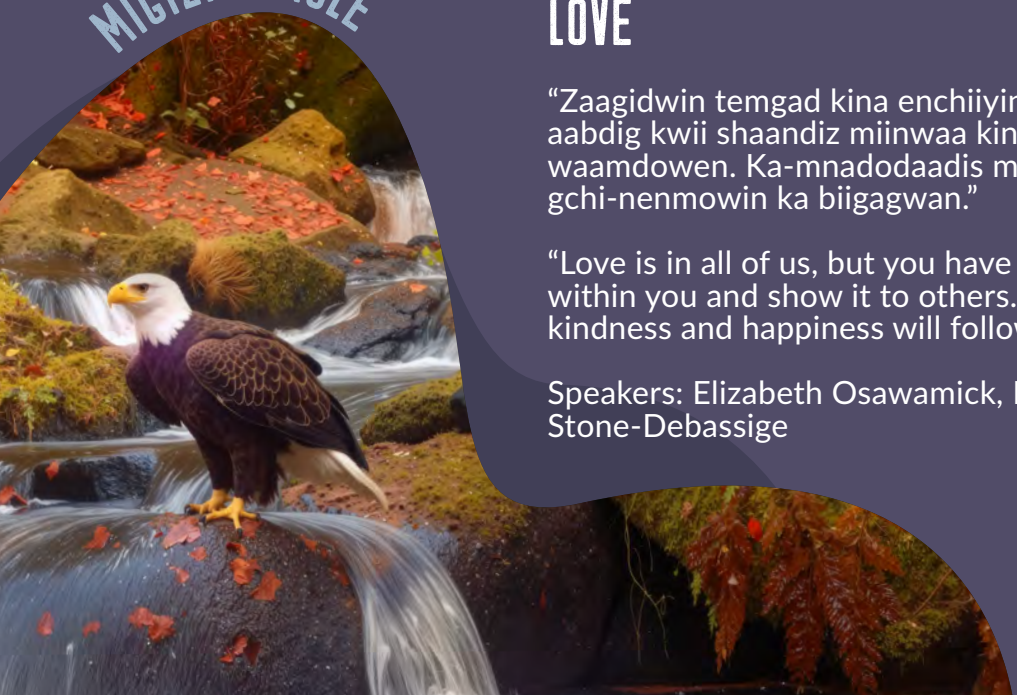
WISDOM

“Nbwaakaawin kina ekenmeng bmaadziweninaa binjibaamgad ezhi bmaadiziyang miinwaa ezhi-kinoomaagoyeng.”

“Wisdom is all about knowledge acquired through life and teaching by our Elders.”

Speakers: Elder Rita Rose, Florence Osawamick

MIGIZI EAGLE



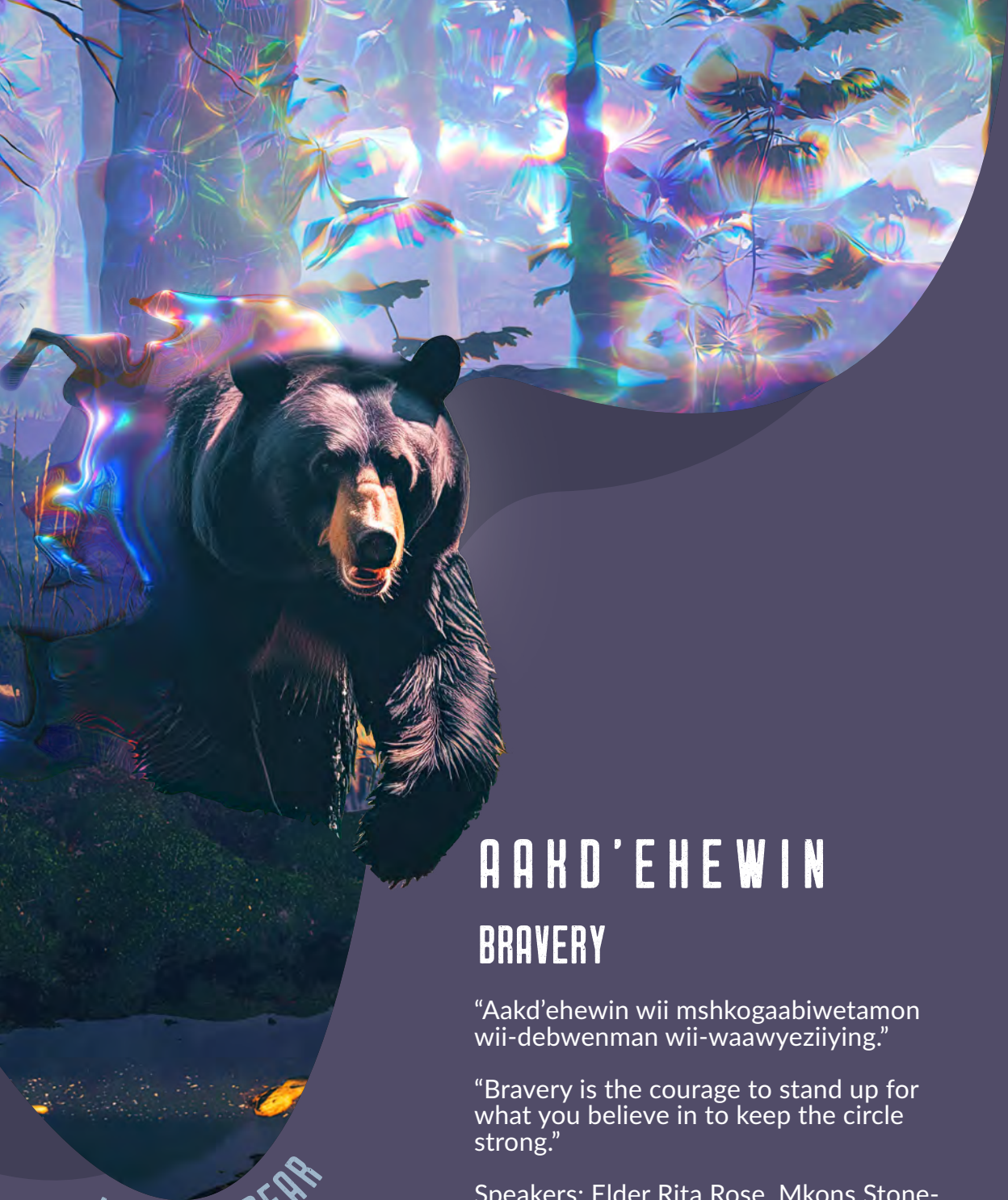
ZAAGIDWIN

LOVE

“Zaagidwin temgad kina enchiiying, aabdig kwii shaandiz miinwaa kina kwii waamdowen. Ka-mnadodaadis mii dash gchi-nenmowin ka biigagwan.”

“Love is in all of us, but you have to feed it within you and show it to others. Act with kindness and happiness will follow you.”

Speakers: Elizabeth Osawamick, Mkons Stone-Debassige



MAKWA BEAR

AAKD'EHEWIN

BRAVERY

"Aakd'ehewin wii mshkogaabiwetamon wii-debwenman wii-waawyeziiying."

"Bravery is the courage to stand up for what you believe in to keep the circle strong."

Speakers: Elder Rita Rose, Mkons Stone-Debassige

"SPEAK EVERY WORD YOU KNOW..."

Language is more than words put together. It carries stories, relationships, knowledge, and ways of seeing the world.

LEARN MORE

Interested in exploring more? Check out additional learning resources from e wiindmaagzijig on our website.

ncam.northumberland.ca

What will you carry with you from this exhibition?

Draw. Write. Remember. Share.



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