

Annual Report 2023-2024

Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council

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BACKGROUND

The Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council (IIKELC) was established in January 2004 as a result of partnerships of many organizations. Efforts to create the council began in 2003 with the recognition that there needed to be a coordinated initiative in addressing the high suicide rate in Nunavut. The Council's twelve-member board collaborates to provide leadership to a small staff team

➤ Opal McInnis	President	Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
➤ Camilla Sehti	Vice-President	Government of Nunavut
➤ Sheila Levy	Treasurer	Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline
➤ Tess Thurber	Secretary	Nunavut Teachers' Association
➤ Marie Michael	Director	Qikiqtani Inuit Association
➤ George Henrie	Director	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
➤ Samantha Tugak-Brown	Director	Kivalliq Inuit Association
➤ Darlene Eyegetok	Director	Kitikmeot Inuit Association
➤ Vacant	Director	Elder
➤ Nancy Natanine	Director	Survivor Member
➤ Vacant	Director	Faith Community
➤ Jonathan Enuaraq	Director	Student Member
➤ Vacant	Director	Nunavut Association of Municipalities

The council is a non-profit organization with charitable status. According to our bylaws, the Council aims to:

- Contribute to the mental, emotional, and physical health and community wellness of Nunavut residents by providing education, research and statistical analysis, a clearing house, training, and a coordinated holistic approach to suicide prevention activities;
- Recruit, coordinate, and provide on-going training to volunteers in order to give them the expertise to deliver suicide prevention and community wellness activities;
- Educate the public on the issues of suicide, mental health, community health, and related issues;
- Acquire sufficient resources in cash or in kind to support the objectives of the Council and communities throughout Nunavut

Our guiding principles are:

- Embracing life—not just preventing death
- Inuit history and Inuit pride drive the programming
- Communities identify their own solutions, recognizing that every community is unique
- Families are central to life—focus on parenting skills, kinship, and teamwork
- Protecting and being aware of and guided by the environment

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is an honour to share Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council's (IIKELC) annual report for 2023-2024. This past year, the strengths of IIKELC in supporting life promotion were ever-present.

IIKELC remains rooted in community-based approaches and compassion. This was evidenced by the development of several key resources. The illustrations for the picture book and the graphic novel *Talking to children about suicide* were finalized this past year. These resources were developed to support families and providers in navigating conversations during deeply difficult times.

In response to a need for enhanced grief supports, IIKELC updated its *Healing Support Group Facilitator training* and moved it online. The organization also began developing a grief journal to support individuals in processing their emotions during a time of loss.

Our reach was extensive, IIKELC delivered over 30 workshops across the territory. Notably, we expanded our offices to Kugluktuk to improve access to our programs and services across all three regions in Nunavut.

The organization worked collaboratively with the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Partners on Nunavut's newest Suicide Prevention Action Plan, Inuusivut Annirnaqtut which is anticipated to be released in the Fall of 2024.

IIKELC continues to unite communities and strengthen partnerships to promote life. None of our work would be possible without the dedication and passion of our staff and volunteers. On behalf of the Board, we are incredibly thankful for their efforts and contributions that are the underpinning of our organization's success.

I would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to our funders and those who have donated to the organization for their continued support of IIKELC's mission and efforts in embracing life.

I am filled with hope and excitement for what IIKELC will achieve in the year to come. I look forward to continuing to strengthen partnerships and forming new meaningful connections to ensure IIKELC is meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

Qujannamiik, Matna, Quana,



Opal McInnis

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great pride that I present the Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council's annual report for the fiscal year 2023-2024. This year has been one of remarkable growth, resilience, and accomplishment for our organization as we continue to adapt to the evolving needs of Nunavummiut.

Among our most significant achievements was the expansion of our team, particularly with the establishment of our new office in Kugluktuk. This has allowed us to better serve the Kitikmeot region, ensuring that more communities have direct access to the resources and support they need. Additionally, our dedicated staff continue to demonstrate exceptional commitment to the work we do in promoting mental wellness, suicide prevention, and community resilience.

Our efforts this year have reached over 600 community members across 11 different communities through workshops and training programs. Initiatives like the "Isumajunnattarniq" app have progressed significantly, providing innovative tools for resilience and healing grounded in Inuit culture. The app, alongside various public education resources, reflects our ongoing commitment to using culturally relevant methods to empower individuals and communities. We have also successfully launched new resources addressing trauma, grief, and substance use, ensuring that Nunavummiut of all ages have access to the support they need.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our partners, funders, and volunteers. I extend my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to our mission. Your belief in our work fuels our drive to keep pushing forward, striving for healthier and more vibrant communities.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge our incredible team and Board of Directors. Your resilience, dedication, and passion are the foundation of IIKELC's success.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I am excited for the projects we have in the pipeline and confident in the continued positive impact IIKELC will have across Nunavut. Together, we will continue to embrace life and empower our communities to thrive.

Qujannamiik, Thank you, merci.



Cecile Guerin

The IIKELC TEAM

IQALUIT

Names	Positions
Cecile Guerin	Executive Director
Danika Pare	Administrative and Operations Assistant
Nastassja Bjørknes	Training Manager
Tooma Laisa	Program Manager and Communications Lead
Ulliaq Kowmuk	Qikiqtani Program Coordinator
Keturah Doucet-Brown	Iqaluit Program Coordinator

RANKIN INLET

Names	Positions
Trevor Nordman	Kivalliq Program Coordinator
Keisha Aliyak	Kivalliq Program Coordinator

KUGLUKTUK

Name	Position
Jennifer Ongahak	Kitikmeot Program Coordinator

ARCTIC BAY

Name	Position
Richard Bohlender	Manager, Atii Angutiit

OUT OF TERRITORY

Names	Positions
Misha Leach	Program Development Coordinator
Kara Ashley	Program Development Coordinator

TRAINING PROGRAM DELIVERY

Currently, we are able to offer the following workshops in Nunavut communities when requested:

Uqaqatigiiluk! (ASIST) is the Nunavut version of ASIST, a two-day course from Living Works Education (www.livingworks.net). The workshop is structured around small group discussions and skills practice based on adult learning principles. Participants learn to recognize the signs of suicide behavior and the skills to talk to people who are thinking of killing themselves. It empowers participants to feel comfortable intervening and keeping a person safe by making a plan or connecting them with further help.

Reach OUT helps community members aged 15 and up to feel more comfortable, confident, and competent in directly preventing the immediate risk of suicide. It is a half day suicide alertness workshop that will provide tools and guidelines to:

- **Recognize** the signs of distress,
- **Ask** about suicide with more ease,
- **Listen** by using helpful attitudes,
- **Refer** to appropriate resources.

Trauma Informed Practice Training is a full-day workshop designed to increase individual success and wellbeing in Nunavut. It helps participants understand how to better support individuals who have experienced trauma, whether first hand, historically, or intergenerationally. Participants do not need any formal preparation to attend the training. We encourage all frontline and service staff to take this training, from support through administration.

Youth Self-Injury is a half-day workshop designed by Nunavummiut for Nunavummiut to provide an overview in understanding the reasons why youth may self-injure and then to provide practical strategies for working with self-injuring youth. Participants do not need any formal preparation to attend the training. We encourage all frontline and service staff to take this training, from support through administration.

Our Children, Our Responsibility was developed in partnership between Embrace Life Council, Voicefound, and the Government of Nunavut. OCOR is a full day Nunavut-specific child sexual abuse prevention workshop designed to improve community awareness, knowledge, and behavior. It provides hope for the adults who take it that we can become more supportive of children and reduce children's vulnerability to childhood sexual abuse. Participants also learn how to respond to reports of child sexual abuse.

Inuusiq Pimmariujuq is a two-day strategic planning event designed to promote community health, wellness, suicide prevention, and life affirmation. The event enables participants to create a community-specific action plan for implementation. The event begins with a sharing circle honouring our stories before moving into a discussion of how far we've come in Nunavut since the pre-contact era. With this grounding, we begin an active review of strengths and opportunities in the community, which will inform the final action plan. Inuusiq Pimmariujuq includes a plan for follow-up and support by Embrace Life Council Program Coordinators with the community development team.

Virtual Healing Support Group Facilitator Training is a two-day training designed to promote healing and enable local community adult paraprofessionals to facilitate group healing. Participants will be given the practical skills and tools they need to coordinate and facilitate group healing sessions, as well as suggested access to potential sources of funding to support their group programming. The training includes mindfulness and self-care strategies to assist facilitators to maintain their own wellness while providing this valuable community service.

Canadian Red Cross Babysitter Training Course covers everything from managing difficult behaviours to essential content on leadership and professional conduct as a babysitter. Babysitting promises to deepen and enhance the responsibility that older youth feel when caring for younger children.

Talking to Children about Suicide was developed in response to a number of requests from community members who wanted to know how best to support children who have experienced a death by suicide in their family, friend group or wider social circle.

Talking to Children about Suicide is a half-day workshop that aims to provide community members with information about:

- How to approach the topic of suicide with children
- How children may respond to a death by suicide,
- How to discuss the death in an age-appropriate way and,
- The importance of self-care when dealing with this difficult subject



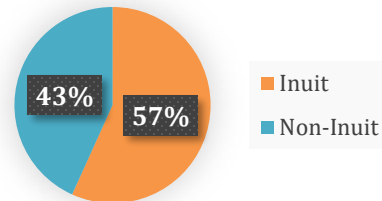
This year, we hosted the following workshops:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

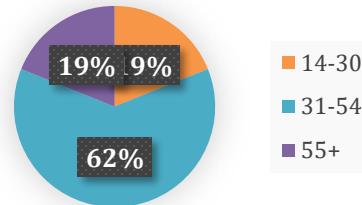
Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Rankin Inlet	37	GN Mental Health staff Group home staff, PKFC staff Community members

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age

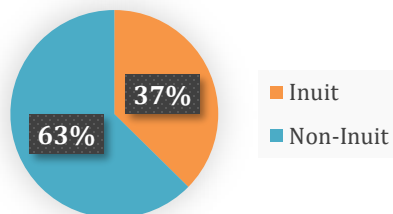


Our Children, Our Responsibility

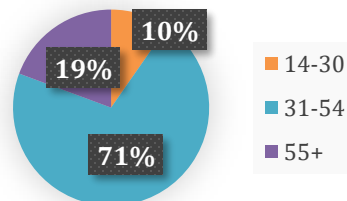
Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit Grise Fiord Arviat Chesterfield Inlet	213	School staff

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age

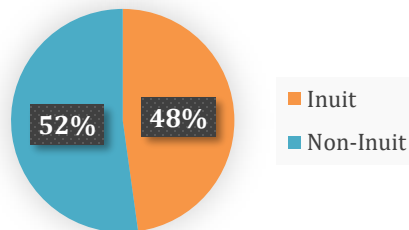


Trauma Informed Practice

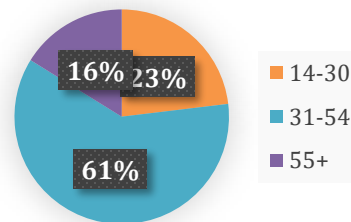
Communities		# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit	Kinngait	470	School staff
Resolute Bay	Grise Fiord		QGH staff
Kugluktuk	Cambridge Bay		Artcirc staff
Igloolik	Rankin Inlet		Qanuipitaa? staff
Kugaaruk			

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age

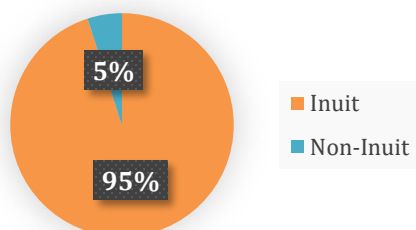


Reach OUT

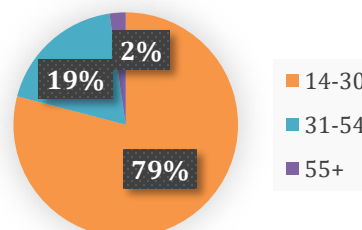
Communities	# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit	86	Elementary and High school students
Pangnirtung		Nunavut Sivuniksavut students
Ottawa		Qanuipitaa? Staff
Igloolik		Artcirc staff

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age

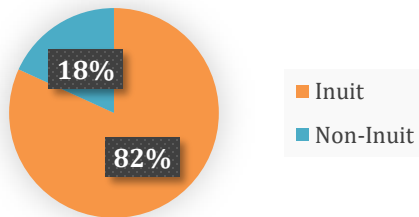


Healing Support Group Facilitator Training

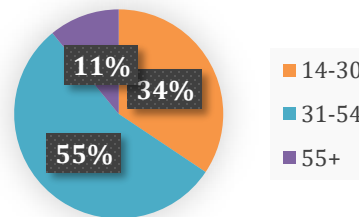
Communities		# Participants	Participants
Iqaluit	Kinngait	74	GN Mental Health staff
Kugluktuk	Cambridge Bay		Shelter staff
Chesterfield Inlet	Nauyaat		Social Services Program students
Rankin Inlet	Arviat		Youth program facilitators
Coral Harbour			Victim Services staff
			CHRs - School staff

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age

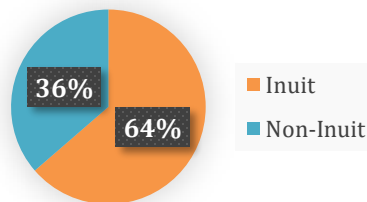


Talking to Children about Suicide

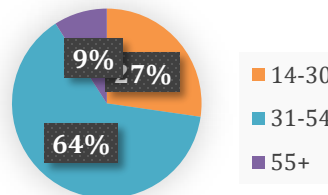
Communities	# Participants	Participants
Pangnirtung	11	School staff

Demographics

Ethnicity



Age



Canadian Firearms Safety Course

We secured again funding in order to provide the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course** (CFSC) to Nunavummiut free of charge. The CFSC was developed in partnership with the provinces and territories, national organizations with an ongoing interest in firearms safety, and many firearms and hunter educator course instructors from across Canada. In Nunavut, this course not only supports a valuable life skill, but also provides an opportunity to educate community members about the safe storage of firearms in order to reduce access to a means to attempt suicide. We funded 20 courses in 10 communities. Communities included:

➤ Cambridge Bay	(23 participants)
➤ Pond Inlet	(12 participants)
➤ Chesterfield Inlet	(10 participants)
➤ Kugluktuk	(10 participants)
➤ Gjoa Haven	(5 participants)
➤ Kinngait	(9 participants)
➤ Taloyoak	(10 participants)

Total of participants: 79

PUBLIC EDUCATION PROJECTS

This year we worked on multiple resources under different topics:

1- Mental wellness

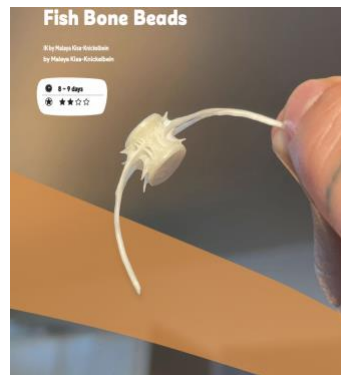
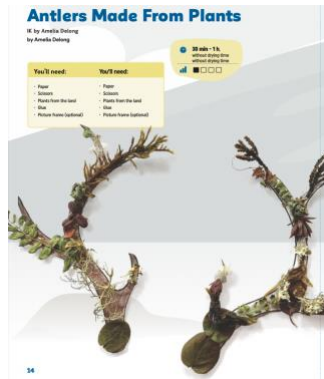
- We continued co-developing the “**Isumajunnattiarniq**” eHealth app.

The app is centered around resilience and mindfulness interventions, featuring culturally curated tools for healing and resilience that can assist Nunavummiut.

These include Elder-led traditional stories of resilience, traditional songs for strength, culturally connected meditations, nature-based soundscapes, guided movement exercises, and safety planning. Using the concept of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR), this resource is intended to not only provide a relaxation/cultural experience for GBV survivors but to also provide support in the form of resources (available offline) that arm them with knowledge about trauma-related symptoms they may be experiencing, as well as coping strategies.



- Two **Arts and Crafts Tutorial Books** (for children and adults) were created this year to inspire creativity and foster pride in the culture and environment of Nunavummiut. These books offer a variety of art projects, each with its own unique style, allowing everyone to explore and develop their creative skills in different forms.



2- Substance use

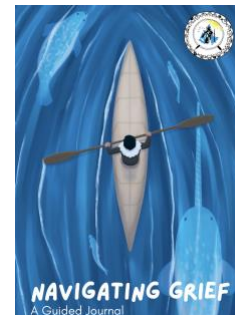
Addiction Education is a program for youth that was developed to learn how drugs work in the brain and how to make informed decisions about your health. This program includes four presentations/lessons: Addiction 101, Cannabis, Alcohol and Stimulants. A facilitator's guide that goes along with the PowerPoint presentations has been developed. This program includes discussions and activities to engage the participants. This program has been shared with the communities during the Embrace Life Week 2024. It will be included in the catalogue with Connected North for the school year 2024-2025.

3- Grief and loss

- The illustrations for the pictures book (ages 5-9) and the graphic novel (ages 9-12) **Talking to children about suicide** have been finalized. We received the pictures books and sent copies of them to all communities in May 2024 (Department of Family Wellness and Mental Health).
- We have successfully updated the **Healing Support Group Facilitator training** and made it available virtually. This training now provides a comprehensive framework for a peer group program, offering the flexibility needed to address the diverse needs of participants. The group is designed to support individuals on their journey, providing a space for exploring grief and reflecting on shared experiences during sessions. As part of this project, we have developed three key resources: the Healing Support Group Facilitation Guidelines, the Healing Support

Group Facilitator Training Manual, and the PowerPoint presentation for the two-day training.

- We started to develop the ***Grief Journal for Adults***. The journal guides individuals through the grieving process by offering tools for understanding and managing their emotions. It begins by explaining grief and its stages, encouraging quiet reflection and exploration of complex feelings. The journal provides practical strategies for coping and learning new skills to adjust to life after loss. It emphasizes the importance of moving forward while honoring the past, maintaining relationships, and finding strength through community support. Finally, it offers resources for ongoing healing and ways to remember and cherish loved ones.



4- Trauma Informed Practice online course

All modules of the Trauma Informed Practice online course have been completed. The courses on our Learning Management System will provide evidence-based and trauma-informed skills training for both GBV survivors and first responders. Our courses focus on traditional community-based restorative approaches. There have been some delays with the launch, we asked Pinnguaq to work on the lay out so the modules can be more user friendly.

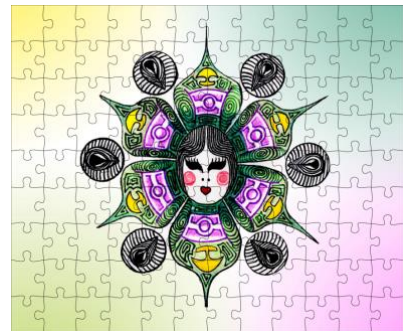
5- Sexual trauma

- ***Affirmation cards*** are a set of 53 cards and a booklet. This affirmation deck was created to support Nunavummiut who have experienced prior sexual trauma. We hope these cards will provide them with words of encouragement whenever they need them and serve as a reminder of their strength and resilience. We are aiming to complete this project in the fall 2024.
- The script of our third book for children "***My Heavy Secret***" (Version 1) has been finalized. This story talks about two brothers who have been sexually abused by

their uncle. The book conveys empathy, love, and support for the brothers, and includes a helpful guide for parents at the end. The illustrator is working on this book and we are hoping that the first draft will be available in the fall.

6- Mental Health/Health Promotion

- IIKELC sent a **newsletter** on a bi-monthly basis. This newsletter brings updates to community members who are interested in hearing about the organization, exciting achievements and additional stories. It is also an opportunity share our new resources, training and our collaborations with new partners!
- Launched the annual **Mental Health Art Contest 2023** in September 2023. The contest was offered to three different age groups (10-13, 14-19, 19+) and the theme was: *Memories*. We developed canvas pouches, puzzles and tote bags with the drawings of the 12 winners. All items will be sent to the Mental Health Nurses in the communities for distribution.

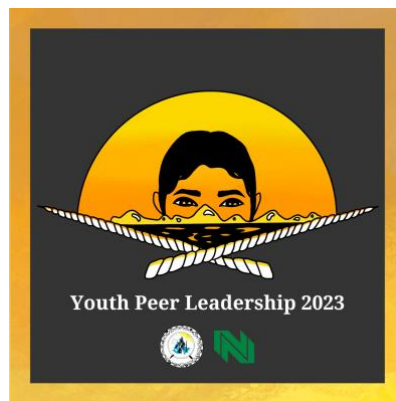


- IIKELC successfully coordinated the second **Peer Leadership Mental Health Program** in Iqaluit from November 29-December 1, 2023. Nine (9) youth aged 18-25 were selected from the Qikiqtani Region to attend this program. This program was designed with the learning goals to foster youth's confidence in being supportive peers in relation to receiving disclosures of abuse and thoughts of suicide. It was also designed with the intention of promoting youth's ability to advocate for wellness activities and services that they would like to see in their community, while also learning new coping mechanisms and creative alternatives to drugs and alcohol.

During the 3-day program, youth attended workshops discussing suicide intervention, healthy relationships, communications skill building, and the Peer Leadership Mental Health Program. During open hours of the duration of program, participants were invited to attend self-care workshops to pass time. Some participants made their own bath salt mixtures and others also attended a

full day of Linocut Art with Siku Rojas, a local artist in Iqaluit. These workshops allowed participants to gain more skills in other kinds of leadership/arts, and a sense of how to practice self-care, when they can do it and why it is important.

All the feedback and evaluation forms we've received thus far, has been really positive and encouraging. The program was delivered well, mostly prepared and planned, and was the appropriate time length. Many participants enjoyed most of their time with the Guest Speakers out of all the activities and enjoyed the topics they choose to discuss. The expectations of each participant were met, and they were more confident with themselves after completing the program.



ON GOING ACTIVITIES

- Distribution of public education materials and materials related to the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee. Activities to date include:
 - Distributed extra resources (i.e. pamphlets, posters, resources cards) on different topics when required
 - Increased translation of materials (Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun and French) for distribution on public bulletin boards, website, social media, etc.
 - Development and distribution of promotional materials for Embrace Life Day across Nunavut that promoted the work of IIKELC and directed Nunavummiut to access the Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Help Line, First Nations and Inuit Help for Wellness Hotline, and Kids Help Phone; and,

- Increasing community awareness of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and the efforts being undertaken through Inuusivut Anninaqtuq by the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, IIKELC and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
- Continuing updating our social media and the website to be more user friendly and reach target audiences in Nunavut with both resources and materials from IIKELC.
- Participate as an active member in the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy Implementation Committee, the Katinganiq Makerspace Network, the working group of the Aqqusariaq, Roots of Hope and the Nunavut Association for Non-Profit Organizations

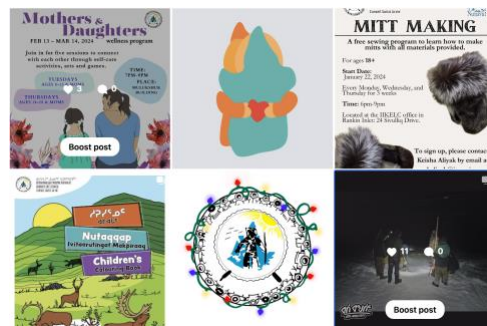
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our Community Support funding supports community programs at the IIKELC offices (sewing programs, beading classes, cultural program...) and community outreach.

- Embrace Life Day events in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk
- Tea and Bannock (June 21),
- Seven (7) Ear Acupuncture clinics in Iqaluit

IIKELC hired local instructors/carpenters to teach community members different skills:

- Tufting program to 19 participants in Iqaluit
- Babysitters training to 28 youth aged 11-14 in Iqaluit
- Children's winter parka drive in Iqaluit (9 participants), distributed 18 parkas
- Beaded programs in Iqaluit (21 participants)
- Sewing programs in Rankin Inlet (7 participants)
- Mothers and Daughters program in Kugluktuk (17 participants)

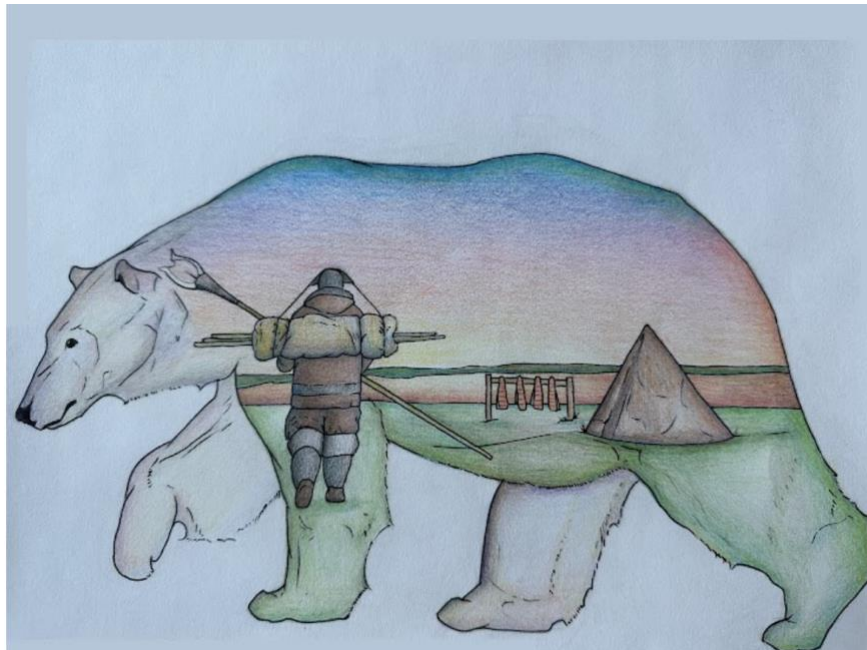


FINANCIAL REPORTING

See audited financial statement. Our core funding (operations and salaries) is provided by both the Nunavut Territorial Government via the Department of Health and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated via the Department of Social and Cultural Development.

“Remembering before” from Alexander Angnaluk

Winner of the Mental Health Art Contest 2023 (adult group)



CONTACT

Opal McInnis

President

Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council

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