

Onashiwin keeps ahead with SDCF grant for Head Start Program Deadline to apply for next round of SDCF grants Sept. 30

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE –September 10, 2021

Carrying on as best we can has been the rallying cry for many an organization as COVID-19 turned our worlds upside down and Kathy Duncan knows that as well as anyone.

The Program Coordinator for Onashiwin Aboriginal Head Start Program had to find a way to connect with families that couldn't enter the building anymore, but Duncan and her top-notch staff of educators found a safe way in – via Zoom.



Food security was important over the COVID-19 pandemic, and Onashiwin provided healthy food hampers to their families.

“When we are hooked up to Zoom, we’re seeing everybody’s beautiful faces and they are very appreciative, saying, ‘you’re the only interaction I’ve had this week,’” Duncan said while still in the midst of the pandemic and government public health orders that kept kids at home.

“We’re able to still have that connection with the family, be there to support them.”

And, they were able to share curriculum kits with the families, and allow the three- and four-year-olds that attend the program to keep learning.

The kits were purchased with a grant from the Selkirk & District Community Foundation (SDCF). Duncan said they were also able to buy air purifiers and a fogger to sanitize their space as well as outdoor mats for when the kids returned. Onashiwin also ensured families were well fed during the pandemic by providing food hampers, including an Easter hamper with all the fixings.

Bev Clegg, SDCF Executive Director, said knowing the Foundation was able to support continued learning during a difficult time is satisfying,

“Hearing about how a grant from the Foundation allowed Onashiwin to make that crucial connection with not just the kids, but their families too, was special,” Clegg said.

“We have a shared bond in knowing what a difficult time COVID was, and to know that kids were able to keep learning and that they and their families got a mental health boost, even if they didn’t know they needed it, is incredible. It’s what the Foundation is all about.”

Duncan said the kits were instrumental in connecting with the families while they stayed at home, and they’re just as important now that kids can return on site.

“We feel blessed to partner with the Selkirk & District Community Foundation. They were able to fund us for some curriculum kits, so each child received a kit with pencils and crayons and scissors, erasers, everything for school readiness,” Duncan said.

“Not only did the kits go home, but we have the individual kits here that only that child can use.”

“Our hearts are happy. A huge shout out and thank you to the Selkirk & District Community Foundation for allowing us to give all of these special events and experiences to our families.”

The SDCF is accepting grant applications now with a deadline of Sept. 30 to apply.

Applicants must be a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency, located and providing services within the City of Selkirk or the RMs of St. Andrews or St. Clements.

Grant application has moved solely online this year. Go to sdcfa.ca for an application. Call 204-785-9755 or email selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca for more information.

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in the region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$3.4 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations during its 25 years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.9755.