

Western Arctic Youth Collective

2020 \$97,000 YOUTH CATEGORY WINNER

ARCTIC
INSPIRATION PRIZE



PRIX INSPIRATION
ARCTIQUE

“COMMUNITY CARE IS ALL ABOUT SUPPORTING EACH OTHER WITH LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE, CREATING A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE FEELS LIKE THEY BELONG. IT'S A POWERFUL MOVEMENT THAT'S ALL ABOUT INCLUSIVITY AND MAKING SURE THAT EVERYONE FEELS VALUED AND RESPECTED, NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY COME FROM.”

Western Arctic Youth Collective

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

Nominator: *Natasha Kulikowski, Mayor of Inuvik*

Team: Alyssa Carpenter, Co-Founder/Project Director (Team Leader), Killulark Arngna'naaq, Corrine Bullock, Arlyn Charlie, Jacey Firth-Hagen, Holly Rebecca Hesk Jones, Myha Martin, Jocelyn Noksana, Mariyah Snowshoe, Wade Clifford Vaneltsi

This report was compiled and created by the Qatalyst Research Group, with the help of Peggy Jay, the project team, and AIP.

THE JOURNEY

The Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC) was created in 2020 by Inuvialuit and Gwich'in youth, for youth with connections to the Beaufort Delta region of the Northwest Territories. The original idea for this platform was first discussed in October 2018, when youth shared the value of gathering in the Beaufort Delta region on an annual basis. The first collaborations took place in 2019: a youth gathering at Midway Lake in August, and a hide culture camp at Project Jewel's campsite in Gwich'in Territorial campgrounds in September. In March 2020, the Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC) became an official project of MakeWay.

“WAYC IS FULL OF THESE HARD-WORKING SELFLESS INDIVIDUALS AND THEY'RE IN IT FOR THE CHANGE.”

Wilfred Johnston, Hand Games Instructor,
Twslin Tlingit Council First Nations

2021	2022	2023	2024
<p>Local2Global event Youth Digital Stories and Exchange</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local2Global event Mental Health Workshop on Grief and Loss • Handgames teachings across Gwich'in Settlement Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoti'steeda Information is Medicine event • Hoti'steeda annual Ełets'ehdèe-Katimaqatigiit-Nihkhah Łatr'iljil event • N'we Jinan video creation (9 videos) • Art and Wellness Culture Camp on Banks Island • Caribou Summit (including video creation with Reel Youth) 	<p>Inuit Tunniit Tattoo Gathering in Ulukhaktok</p>

BUILDING CAPACITY, RELATIONSHIPS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Staff members are youth from the North who recognized a need for a collective that supported their peers. Read more about them: <https://www.wayc.ca/meet-the-team>



Alyssa Carpenter

"I NEEDED [TO
CREATE]
SOMETHING THAT
I COULD HAVE
USED."



Tate Juniper



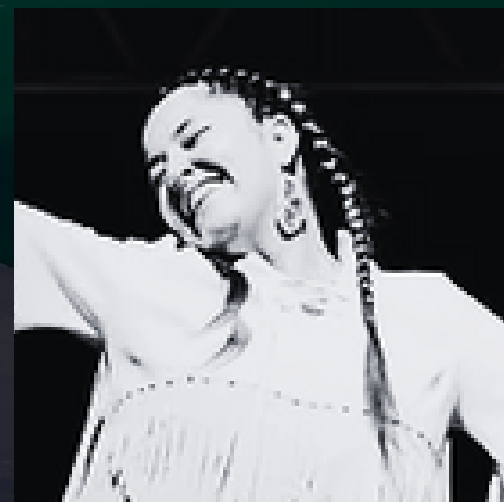
Bobbi Rose Koe



Jacey Firth-Hagen



Kaila Jefferd-Moore



Monica Loreen Dillon



Autumn Koe-Schnell

Youth are leading the change that they need. Events focus on ensuring a well-rounded experience, and include resilience kits and encourage self-care. Youth build confidence, self-awareness, collective mentorship, and education. WAYC not only focuses on their own events, but have also supported other AIP Laureates to complete their projects: Treaty Talks NWT and the Indigenous Youth River Guide Training.

EMPOWERING A GENERATION OF CHANGEMAKERS

“WE STILL HAVE SOME WORK TO DO BUT NOW WE HAVE CLARITY, ALIGNMENT, AND A PRACTICAL VISION OF WAYC FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS THAT IS ACHIEVABLE, GUIDED BY COLLECTIVE VALUES, AND INFORMED BY THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION.”

@waycwayc 2022 Strategic
Planning Meeting

AIP funding has supported the gathering of youth and capacity-building needed to further develop WAYC, an organization that is made up of well-known youth who were born and raised in the region, and have hosted and participated in previous youth-led programming over the years. The funds directly translated to supporting the growth of WAYC and increasing their capacity to meaningfully engage and involve other youth in program creation and development.

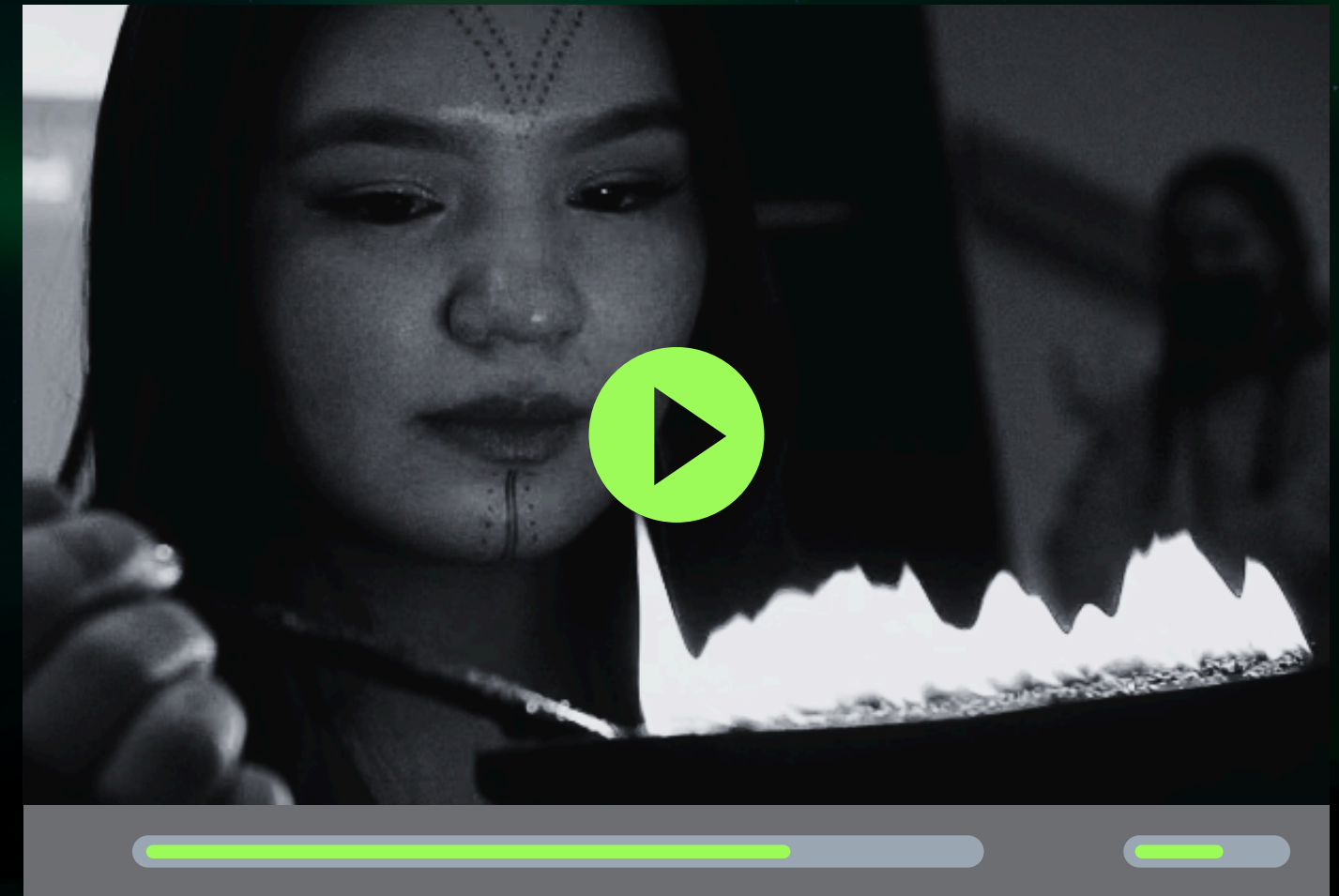


CREATING SPACES OF INCLUSION, SAFETY, EMPATHY, & WARMTH

In 2021, WAYC collaborated with Gwich'in Council International to create a Local2Global event: *Youth Digital Stories and Exchange*. The first Local2Global/WAYC event featured 57 unique attendees, 50 wellness kits, 28 feedback responses, 15 youth presenters, 15 beaded earring kits, 11 paintings, 10 Project CREATeS films, 10 reasons to stay alive, 7 in-person events, 6 virtual events, and 3 prize draws.

The second WAYC Local2Global event, *Mental Health Workshop on Grief and Loss* in Inuvik, was held from December 9th to 11th, 2022. Young people had the chance to get to know each other and share their stories. The workshop included Elders, Indigenous cultural support workers, and Indigenous counsellors.

For more videos related to the 2022 Local2Global event, please visit <https://reelyouth.ca/oldcrow-2022.html>.



Local2Global Gathering 2022: <https://youtu.be/epHhAUG9Rh4>

"THERE'S HOPE. THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE. EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE, THINGS WILL CHANGE IN YOUR LIFE EVEN THOUGH IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY RIGHT NOW. BUT YOU HAVE TO TAKE THAT STEP IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THAT CHANGE. BUT YES, THERE IS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE... THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE."

Arsaniq Deer, Inuk Tattooist Guest Speaker & Presenter

HANDGAMES IN THE DELTA

<https://youtu.be/1-314PyKQx0>



"ONCE YOU GET ON THE MAT AND
YOU START PLAYING YOU DON'T
WANT TO STOP."

Tayvin Calberry

On Indigenous Peoples Day 2022, WAYC was contracted by the Gwich'in Tribal Council to teach handgames in the Gwich'in Settlement region. WAYC approached a team of handgame players based in the Yukon to assist them on a journey where they would travel the Northwest Territories to demonstrate and teach handgames.

Participants hold a stone or token in their hand and try to trick their opponent into guessing which hand possesses the stone. Participants are energetic, moving their arms and hands, dancing, laughing, and listening to the drums sounding through the area.

The team toured to four communities in the Delta region: Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, and Tsiigehtchic. The goal was to create enough interest and excitement about handgames that each community would submit one team to a 2-day tournament in Inuvik. Anticipating four teams would join them in Inuvik, seven participated.

INFORMATION IS MEDICINE

In 2023, Hoti'steeda hired WAYC to help with their *Information is Medicine* event. WAYC helped by coordinating youth panels, inviting speakers, and supporting them in the conference space.

The main objectives of the *Ehkw'i Gode Dq: Information is Medicine Youth Vaccination Gathering* were to have NWT Indigenous youth share and discuss their views on vaccination and develop community-based vaccination and Indigenous health and wellness education, promotional materials, activities, and outreach strategies. While painting, drawing, and creating, youth discussed what health and wellness look like for themselves and for their communities. From this gathering, with the help of Reel Youth, *Reconnection & Two Worlds* were made.

“DO THEY KNOW THE CLARITY I FEEL WHEN I’M SPEAKING WITH AN ELDER?”



Reconnection: <https://youtube/YyHP8hYaFeO>



Two Worlds: <https://youtube/ftfwAAT-O6o>

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND EACH OTHER

One of the best things about WAYC's on-the-land programming is the loving involvement of Elders and knowledge keepers. There are many cultural and traditional connections through hand games, drumming, beading workshops, bonfires, and stories. The connections that individuals make with each other and to the land help build increased pride and confidence in themselves and their communities.

Through N'we Jinan's Mobile Production Studio, youth collaborate to write, sing, and record original songs centred on themes of cultural identity, language, struggle, love, and self-acceptance. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/@nwejinan> for more videos.



Don't Give Up was written and recorded by a group of youth from Tuktoyaktuk in the Northwest Territories.

Video by: Andrei Savu
Produced & Mixed by: Milan André Boronell,
Andrei Savu and Derwin Watt
Mastered by: Kristofer Harris

https://youtu.be/N_OAVTfsf28

NO NO NO

WE DON'T WANNA RELOCATE

(THIS IS MY HOME, MY HOME)

NO NO NO

THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE

(WE LIVE HERE)

AND WE'LL NEVER GO

The lyrics for *Don't Give Up* were written by the youth from Tuktoyaktuk.

A TRAUMA-INFORMED, HEALING-CENTRED APPROACH TO ART

In 2023 WAYC hosted an *Art and Wellness Culture Camp* on Banks Island. They brought together youth from across the arctic to focus on sharing stories, learn about trauma awareness, coping, and emotional regulation techniques and skills that are centered around expressive and cultural activities.

They invited youth that wanted to learn about ways to take care of themselves and others, while understanding why some others around them may have difficulty coping, healing, and grieving. The camp took a trauma-informed, healing-centred harm reduction approach towards art, the mind, and the body. Cultural and language activities were done to remind youth about the strength of their skills, knowledge, and the power of being on the land together while they fished, made dryer fish, harvested plants, explored new areas, and learned about their history.

Western Arctic Youth Collective

"TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES, OUR LAND, AND EACH OTHER"

**BANKS-ISLAND
ART & WELLNESS
CULTURE CAMP**

When: July 28 to August 6
Where: Middle Lake, outside Sachs Harbour

Learn about ways to support ourselves and others in our communities with coping strategies focused on creative expression and cultural activities in a land-based setting.

For Indigenous young people ages 15-30 with connections to the Northwest Territories.

Deadline to apply is July 3, 2023

For more information, email alyssa@wayc.ca

Government of Northwest Territories | Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada | CANADIAN NORTH

VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

WAYC has developed tools to guide other individuals and organizations to be the change that's needed in the North. They hope to find ways to be more efficient, healthy, sustainable, and balanced personally and professionally as individuals, a team, and within their communities.

How to Host Your Own Event: A Toolkit for Youth Groups and Community Organizers was created by WAYC for youth groups and community organizations.

Dreams for the future include securing ongoing funding for WAYC, and creating a permanent and welcoming space for youth to come together (youth café').

IT IS THE DUTY OF US
YOUNG PEOPLE TO
PROTECT OUR CULTURE
AND TRADITIONS AND
TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT
THIS SPIRIT WILL LIVE
ON TO THE NEXT
GENERATIONS.

@waycwayc

https://www.instagram.com/p/C3QGc_vrWpa/



2024 Wellness Retreat

PARTNERS, FUNDERS, COLLABORATORS.

Tahiuqtiit Women's Society

Ulukhaktok Community Corporation

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

Regional Youth Advisory Group

Indigenous Youth Roots

Indigenous Services Canada

Nahanni River Adventures

Dene Nahjo

Arctic Indigenous Fund

Inuvik Native Band

Jordan's Principle

Gwich'in Tribal Council

Inuvik Minor Hockey Association

Can Nor

Government of Canada

Canadian North

Local2Global

Hotì ts'eeda

Fort McPherson RRC

Government of the Northwest Territories

Dechinta Centre

Arrowsmith Productions

Yellowknife Book Cellar

Tree of Peace Friendship Centre

Parks Canada

N'we Jinan

Hamlet of Sachs Harbour

Sachs Harbour Recreation Committee

Sachs Harbor Community Corporation

Dinjii Zhuh Adventures

Makerspace

Dene Nation Youth Council

Tłı̨chǫ Government

Public Health Agency of Canada

We Matter

The Students on Ice Foundation

The Town of Inuvik

Canadian Roots Exchange

Council of Yukon First Nations

Nihtat Gwichin Council

Status of Women Council of the NWT

Arctic Council

Sustainable Development Working Group

GNWT Healthy Choices Fund

Cloudberry Wellness

Brighter Futures Fund

Western Arctic Moving Pictures

Northern Voices Rising