

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



**The
Indigenous
Community
Safety
Partnership
Program
won the
2021 AIP
\$500,000
prize.**

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: Premier Sandy Silver
Government of Yukon

Team: Gina Nagano (Team Leader), Ashley Cummings, Jedrek Dendys, MJ (Mary Ellen) Donald, Chantal Genier, Elder Judy Gingell, Darcy Marcotte, Katie McPherson, Jeff Myke, Lana Selbee, Janine Workman and Lilia Yumagulova

This report was compiled and created by the **Qatalyst Research Group**, with the help of Bobbi Rose Koe, the project team, and AIP.

A NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Indigenous Community Safety Partnership Program (ICSPP) addresses root causes of intergenerational trauma, violence, and vulnerability through first-of-its-kind Indigenous-led training, certification, mentorship enabling First Nations governments to own, implement, sustain community safety, emergency preparedness and justice initiatives.

The ICSPP fosters safer communities, self-determination and wellness through 3 essential areas:

Holistic Community
Safety Assessments
and Planning

Indigenous
Community Safety
Officer/ Guardian
Programs

Community-led
Emergency
Preparedness



The program was developed by House of Wolf and Associates, an Indigenous-owned and operated consultancy firm working to inspire and support Indigenous people and communities. Led by Gina M. Nagano, *President*, and Community Safety Specialist, who served as a Sergeant for 21 years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Her knowledge of Indigenous peoples' history with the formal justice system, residential and child welfare systems, and familiarity with First Nations history, culture, goals, and aspirations is her strength and passion.

FORGING A DIFFERENT PATH

Rooted in an Indigenous worldview, the ICSPP offers a transformative approach to community safety, justice, and resilience. AIP funding enabled this project to take root by helping to:

- Convene an Indigenous Community Safety Summit
- Grow the team and expand services to other communities
- Build communities' capacity towards implementing their community safety priorities

House of Wolf initially worked with Kwanlin Dün First Nation in 2016 to develop a community safety plan and has since worked with an additional 8 communities upon receiving AIP funding in 2021:

- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government
- First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun
- Taku River Tlingit Council
- Ross River Dena Council
- Teslin Tlingit Council
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- Selkirk First Nation
- Carcross/ Tagish First Nation
- Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation

“The AIP allowed me to bring a team together and reach these goals. As a result, we got national publicity.”

Gina Nagano



Aan Yatx'i Saanni dancers perform at the launch of Carcross/Tagish First Nations' safety and wellness initiative. (Lawrie Crawford/Yukon News)

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SAFETY SUMMIT

The Indigenous Community Safety Summit was hosted on the traditional territories of Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council in Whitehorse, Yukon from August 2-4, 2022, and was held to share best practices about the Indigenous Community Safety Partnership Program.

Approximately **100 attendees** gathered to share knowledge and attended panels on truth and reconciliation, the administration of justice, emergency preparedness, crime prevention through environmental design, MMIWG2S+ and Yukon strategy, and climate change, among others. Attendees were also able to enjoy a sacred fire, local catering and live entertainment from the Dakhka Khwaan Dancers and Dena Zagi.

"[The Indigenous Community Safety Summit] is about social issues that are happening in our communities as a result of historical impacts that have happened. Until we reconcile with our own communities and our own people, how can we ever move forward?"

Gina Nagano



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SAFETY SUMMIT: KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Tosh Southwick is a co-owner of IRP Consulting, an Indigenous firm that seeks to inspire reconciliation potential across sectors and support Indigenous self-determination. Tosh is the former Associate Vice President of Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation at Yukon University and oversaw the integration of First Nation ways of knowing and doing throughout the institution.



Dave Joe is the Yukon's first Indigenous lawyer and was involved in the land claim movement in the Yukon for years prior to being called to the bar in 1977. Today, the recognition and implementation of aboriginal rights, titles and interests are still the main focus of his law practice in Yukon and BC.



Jeanie McLean has worked as a Minister of Tourism and Culture, Minister responsible for Women's Directorate and Minister responsible for Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, Minister of Education, and Minister responsible for the Women and Gender Equity Directorate. In 2023 she became Deputy Premier under the leadership of Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai.

BUILDING SOCIAL JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURE

House of Wolf helps communities build their own approaches to community safety by first speaking with Elders to understand historical contexts and traditional laws, and then engaging with Chief and Council, citizens, staff, RCMP, NGOs, victim services and other governmental representatives.

Traditional
Models of
Peacekeeping

HOUSE of WOLF

Holistic and Trauma-
Informed

Rooted in Traditional
Laws and Customs

Built by the
Community, for the
Community

Recognises the
Community and its
Strengths

Mindful of Readiness
and Capacity

Developed by and for
Indigenous People

“We believe that every community has the answers it needs to solve its own problems”

House of Wolf & Associates Inc.

A COMMUNITY-LED PROCESS TOWARDS SAFETY

Understanding the Community



- Community engagement and historical scans
- Understanding a community's lived experience and hopes for the future

Understanding the Environment



- Crime prevention through environmental design
- Physically shaping a community for safety

Preparing for Emergency



- Mitigation and preparedness for natural disasters
- Building capacity to deal with climate change

A Roadmap Forward



- Community goals and 5-year strategic plan
- Safety roadmap: Made by the community for the community

[To learn more about how House of Wolf helps communities build their safety plans, click here.](#)

A THREE-CIRCLE APPROACH

A community safety approach that is embedded within a community's governance, its people, and environment.



Establish safety within communities' governments (occupational health & safety) to ensure employees are safe.



Identify community members' needs to feel safe (community engagement, police statistics, etc.).



Identify what is needed for the community and members to be safe from natural disasters.



BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THEIR SAFETY PLANS

House of Wolf hired a curriculum writer and researcher who created a training program for Community Safety Officers/Guardians. House of Wolf is in the process of working with Yukon University towards creating a unique training program for Community Safety Officers/Guardians to also fill other roles that would address community safety concerns, create employment opportunities and promote self-governance efforts. These positions include:

- Land Resource Officer
- Renewable Resource Officer
- Environmental Officer
- Resilience Officer

In addition to the CSO training curriculum, House of Wolf has partnered with the Council of Yukon First Nations to create the Mental Wellness and Cultural Resiliency Program (MWCR) to address gaps and build capacity in communities to promote mental wellness and cultural resiliency in Yukon First Nations.

The MWCR Program, at its core, is based on the understanding that mental wellness is multi-dimensional and integral for healthy individuals, communities, and families. Mental wellness is supported by culture, language, Elders, families, and creation. The program focuses primarily on two concepts:

- Fostering healthy interrelationships
- Increasing mental wellness and cultural resiliency literacy in Yukon communities



HOUSE of WOLF
& Associates

Council of Yukon
First Nations

MENTAL WELLNESS AND
CULTURAL RESILIENCY

MWCR TRAINING

This five day training program was created to help you provide effective crisis response within your community, reducing the need to rely on external support.

PRIDE IN COMMUNITY IS FOSTERED THROUGH THE PROCESS



The community takes pride in finding their own solutions through the process implemented by the Program. A wide range of community members are involved in the process of building and implementing community-driven plans. The goal is to use the community's values, people, and traditions to address community safety.

By engaging in this process, communities are able to design innovative approaches to address issues that can improve safety. For example, addressing environmental issues and insufficient infrastructure in communities, the installation of street lights, numbering houses, and clearing brush from roadways promote feelings of safety and also increase community pride. Residents are more likely to take on the responsibility of maintaining their communities.

“It's really interesting work to assess environmental elements leading to feelings of not feeling safe. It could be as simple as putting up street signs, numbers on houses, community garbage cleanup, stop signs, reducing speed limit, and boarding up unsafe buildings. It's essentially a way to engage the community in a way that reflects the people and what they want to see every day.”

Lana Selbee

COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICERS

Each community identifies different safety priorities that are unique to the difficulties they face, but one common element has been the establishment of Community Safety Officers.

Community Safety Officers have been called Warrior Watchmen and Watchwomen: trauma-informed community members who liaise with their community, providing support and connecting individuals to needed resources. Their work focuses on the prevention of issues, and they act as connectors between individuals and the services that they need.

The community safety officers has been successfully implemented in four communities:

- Kwanlin Dün First Nation
- Selkirk First Nation
- Teslin Tlingit Council
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation

DEADLY AUNTIES

The Deadly Aunties, Joyce Douville and her sister Margaret, are matriarchal aunties who act as the eyes and ears of Teslin and wear a patch designed for them by their community. They incorporate traditional ways, laws, and knowledge into their approach working with the community..

*“The community knows us, they don’t feel intimidated by us and they feel more comfortable approaching us”
(Joyce Douville, Community Safety Officer)*



[Click Here to Watch the Video](#)

INCREASED TRUST AND CONNECTION

“Trust is huge because citizens trust us, they open up and we can truly address their needs. We are the community messenger and connect to the community to right resources.”

**Darcy Marcotte,
Community Safety Lead
Selkirk First Nation
Pelly Crossing, Yukon**



REDUCING RELIANCE ON COLONIAL STRUCTURES

Having community safety officers/guardians and wellness workers patrolling the community and being a first point of contact reduced reliance on RCMP and other justice/wellness professionals. This allows them to focus on more serious issues.

The community members also feel safer. In Kwanlin Dün First Nation, a follow-up assessment showed that:

- 100% of respondents felt that the Community Safety Officer program aligned with their traditional values and culture;
- Over 90% reported feeling safer; and
- 57% said they used the service.

FUTURE PLANS

“Anywhere there are communities impacted by colonization, they're going through the same thing. I would love to see House of Wolf become an Indigenous global community safety organization.”

Gina Nagano

Gina Nagano and House of Wolf & Associates Inc. has been working with the Government of Yukon to help coordinate downtown Whitehorse safety and wellbeing efforts. Read more [here](#).

Hopes for the future include a true partnership with the Yukon/ Federal government and the dream is for the Indigenous Community Safety Partnership Program to spread across Canada and globally.



“I want to thank my partners like Katie McPherson and Lana Selbee, who first stepped up. I had this vision to apply for the Arctic Inspiration Prize. My team and committee stepped up and got me through to the end. The supporters, the letters of support, the former premier Sandy Silver, all the support letters from everywhere, the support of the communities, the Grand Chief Peter Johnson. I want to thank them. I want to thank the Yukon selection committee for the Arctic Inspiration Prize in 2021. I want to thank Arnold Witzig and the Arctic Inspiration Prize national committee who saw my vision and supported me towards the successful win of the Arctic Inspiration Prize. Without that, I wouldn't be here, and the communities wouldn't be where they are. I wholeheartedly thank every supporter and individual who contributed to the success of the Arctic Inspiration Prize win.”

Gina Nagano