

Wiikwemkoong Community Wellness Highlight

25TH INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Yesterday, Wiikwemkoong gathered in honour and remembrance of the 25th International Overdose Awareness Day held at Naandwechigegamig Wikwemikong Health Centre.

Community members were invited to paint rocks in remembrance of our loved ones. A feast was held and a spirit plate was prepared to feed and honour those who are no longer with us. Beautiful wooden flower beds were installed to commemorate this day. The event ended in a candlelight vigil to honour our loved ones, where community members were welcomed to share their thoughts, prayers and feelings.

Health Services Director, Diane Jacko, provided remarks during the candlelight vigil:

"Miigwech for being here today as we gather in recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day. We come together with heavy hearts, remembering the loved ones, family members, friends, and community members we have lost to overdose. We honour their lives, their stories, and the lasting impact they have had on our families and community."

Today is not only a day of remembrance, but also a day of compassion, understanding and hope. Many of us have felt the pain of a loss, the worry for those we love, and the effects that substance use has had on our community. We acknowledge that behind every overdose is a person who mattered, a family who grieves, and a community that continues to carry that loss.

As Anishinabek, we know the strength that comes

from walking together. Our teachings remind us that healing happens in relationship, through kindness, connection, culture, and supporting one another without judgement. Today, we stand together to reduce stigma, to raise awareness, and to let those who are struggling know that they are not alone.

We also recognize the courage of those who are on their healing journey, the families who continue to support loved ones, the frontline workers who provide care, and the community members who show up every day with compassion and understanding.

Let this gathering be a reminder that every life is sacred. Let us honour those we have lost by continuing to create a community where people feel safe to ask for help, where support is available, and where hope remains stronger than despair.

To all those who are grieving today, please know that we hold you in our hearts. To those who are grieving today, please know that we hold you in our hearts.

To those who are struggling, please know that you are valued, loved, and worthy of support and healing.

Miigwech for being here. May we move through this day in a spirit of remembrance, love, and collective healing."

