

JANUARY 2022

# SCO NEWSLETTER

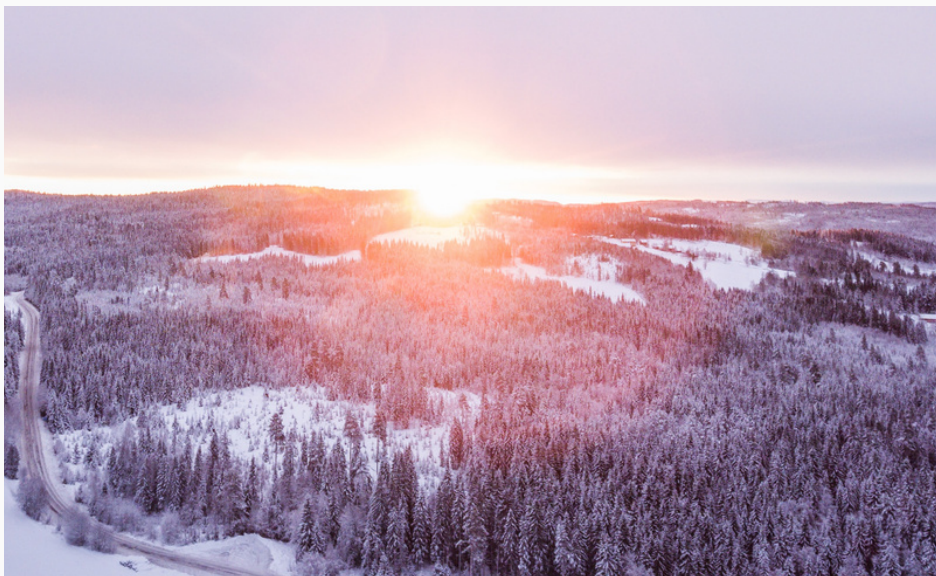
## A Fresh Start

At the start of every year, we often make resolutions and set goals for the coming months. A clean slate brings a renewed sense of hope that is founded on a commitment to making life better for ourselves, our families, or our communities.

As we continue to find new ways to support each other during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit First Nation people harder than other segments of the population, it's more important than ever to maintain a sense of optimism for a better future.

In our first newsletter of 2022, we're highlighting the achievements of some of SCO's program areas in 2021, and re-capping some of the good work we have done together as the year came to a close.

You can read our 2021 year end re-cap here:  
<https://scoinc.mb.ca/2021-a-year-in-review/>.



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## Orange Santa Success

One of the most heartwarming and exciting projects from 2021 was our first ever Orange Santa Initiative, which was created in the spirit of our Every Child Matters campaign.

In this first year, nine of our communities took part and the Orange Santa team delivered gifts to almost 3,000 children.

In addition to support from SCO, thanks go to our Orange Santa sponsors, including Vickar Automotive Group, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and Teekca's Boutique for helping to bring joy to children at Christmas.

We're hopeful that even more communities will take part in 2022!



## Child Welfare Settlement



In December, SCO was pleased to learn about the federal government's announcement that Canada is setting aside \$40 billion for compensation for First Nation children and families harmed by the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.

The non-binding agreement sets aside \$20 billion for compensation and \$20 billion for long-term reform of the on-reserve child welfare system.

If approved, the financial settlement would be the largest of its kind in Canadian history.

March 31 has been set as the deadline to finalize the agreement.

**"As First Nation People have said repeatedly, no amount of money could ever compensate for the harm caused by Canada's child welfare system and the legacy of colonialism in this country," said Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "However, it's an important first step, and the federal government should have honoured the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's ruling when it was handed down. Instead, they chose to alienate victims further by challenging it in court. While I am pleased to learn that \$40 billion has been set aside for compensation and reform, it's now time for swift action to get reparations to victims. The clock is ticking."**





## Bright Future

The conclusion of 2021 brought with it the promise of a prosperity for budding First Nation businesses.



The Southern Chiefs' Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) and Futurpreneur Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in December to combine efforts to support young, aspiring business owners from our member Nations.

The two parties signed an MOU that will see Futurpreneur share information and resources with youth from SCO's 34 member communities, including information on upcoming training and outreach events. Futurpreneur will also designate a contact person in Manitoba for SCEDC to refer southern First Nation youth for support to help them launch businesses.

SCEDC will help to connect youth committees, boards and initiatives with Futurpreneur and their programs, and the two organizations will work together to develop specific training and/or networking events about programming, tools and resources through Futurpreneur.

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## Back to the Land

There was no questioning Elder Courchene's commitment to the land, and there is a remarkable pair of men at Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation who embody that approach as well.

In the summer, the Jordan's Principle department at Birdtail Sioux welcomed a dynamic father and son duo to develop a land-based education program for the community's youth.

Since then, Doug Hanksa Senior and Junior have created something very special. Most recently they immersed their students in the harvesting and processing of wild game. It was an endeavour that included Birdtail grandfathers and grandmothers sharing their knowledge with the youth.

We honour these community champions, and wish them the very best in their plans to expand their teachings of Dakota culture!

Pidamiye!



**Doug and Doug have big plans for their program, which include the development of a full healing camp with a sweat lodge and an Equine Therapy initiative.**



## Program Update – Health Transformation

The Health Transformation team continued to focus on community engagement in 2021.

The work of the Health Transformation team has been guided by the Chiefs Health Action Table (CHAT), the Health Transformation Advisory Circle, Elders via the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Committee, and the Gender Based Violence Advisory Committee. This past year, the Health Transformation team also grew from a staff of 20 to 26. CHAT also evolved from table of five Chiefs to 10, and the Health Transformation Advisory Circle has expanded as well.

In 2021, the team was successful in hosting a Chiefs-in-Summit featuring Berens River's approach to community engagement and Skownan's approach to Indigenous evaluation. The summit also featured the Health Transformation Action Plan, the legal review and governance options presented by Semaganis Worme Lombard, COVID-19 Lessons Learned with SCO Task Force representative and Interlake Region Tribal Council Health Director Cindy Garson, and an approach to Public Health with Health Transformation Advisory Circle member Dr. Joel Kettner.

As we enter a new year, the team's focus now includes a Gender-based Violence Literature Review, a resource review, a position on public health and an approach to mental health and wellness. For the upcoming year, Health Transformation will also work on youth and Veteran engagement.

Other areas of focus will include a health human resource strategy, the establishment of the Health Directors Association, and a Traditional Knowledge Forum as we track toward the formation of a tripartite table and an Agreement in principle with Canada.



### ACTION PLAN!

The Health Transformation team focused on the development of an action plan, which resulted in the creation of seven committees focussed on the following areas:

- Traditional Knowledge
- Governance
- Data
- Evaluation
- Partnership and Collaboration
- Implementation
- Communication





## Program Update – Water Testing

Geoff Reimer was hired in April 2021 to help guide the development of the program, including the creation and implementation of a First Nations led Water Authority.

The initial focus of the Water Authority was the development and formation of a First Nations owned and operated water utility to provide safe, clean drinking water and management of wastewater in SCO First Nation communities, using culture as a primary building block of the utility.

A motion supporting this initiative was presented and approved at the SCO's Chiefs Summit held in September 2021 in Brandon. Efforts are underway to further develop the Water Authority workplace, with initial advice and guidance from the Chiefs Executive Committee.

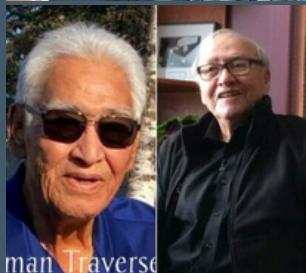
Environment Coordinator Cobina Hardisty was also hired in May of 2021 to lead the water testing team, which included Kenneth Courchene and SCO's Youth Chief Carson Robinson.

The Water Testing Program travelled to 17 communities in 2021 to collect samples. The Water Quality Monitoring program was expanded in 2021 with the inclusion of in-situ water quality testing, an increase in water quality parameters tested, the development of SCO standard operating procedures for sampling and in-situ water quality testing, and the development of monitoring plans for each community.

This work is planned to continue into 2022!



Bloodvein, MB



## Farewell

2021 was not without stories of loss, and there was a very significant one at the start of December.

Grand Chief Jerry Daniels and SCO joined others across Turtle Island and around the globe in grief and celebration over the passing of the beloved Nitamabit/Nii GaaniAki Inini, Elder David Courchene.

Elder Courchene's advocacy for the land and traditional Anishinaabe ways was world-renowned, and it was apparent to anyone who met him that his work was from the heart. We honour Elder Courchene as his spirit makes the journey home. We also reaffirm our support for his vision and goal of establishing a new Turtle Lodge at the sacred site of Manitou Api.

We say a prayer and lay tobacco down for all who are grieving his loss, especially The Elders' Circle of Turtle Lodge at Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation.

We would also like to honour the loss of other great leaders in 2021:

- Norman Traverse Sr., former Chief of Lake. St. Martin First Nation
- Theodore (Ted) Fontaine, Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation
- Larry Soldier, former Chief of Swan Lake First Nation
- Orville Smoke, former Chief of Dakota Plains Wahpeton Oyate

## Walk With Purpose

One of our community members made us particularly proud last month.

Elijah Woodhouse, of Pinaymootang First Nation, walked 231 cold kilometres to support our relatives who are struggling with homelessness and addictions.

Elijah wanted to raise awareness and funds for Main Street Project as the staff there care for our relatives who are housing insecure. On Dec. 13th, Elijah departed his home community and trekked 231 kilometres to the Main Street Project main offices in downtown Winnipeg. Along the way, he collected donations through a Go Fund Me Page, but also asked anyone who could to donate warm winter clothing and other essential items to the Main Street Project.

Miigwetch Elijah for your resolve and beautiful heart.







## Skownan Strong!

We also need to pay tribute to another pair of Treaty 2 youth, specifically Delana Sutherland and Daylon Catcheway from Skownan First Nation.

Thanks to their collective efforts, they were able to secure \$700,000 to build a much-needed new youth centre for the community.

After two years of proposal writing and lobbying, the beautiful “Star Blanket Youth Centre” has just opened its’ doors and is already the talk of the town. It’s a beautiful, bright and, most importantly, safe place for children and youth to gather.

Delana also wants us to credit the rest of the youth in Skownan for their input on this project.

Delana and Daylon, we honour and commend you for being agents of positive change and we thank you for caring for your community and the young people who call it home.



## New Faces at SCO!

Also coming on board is our new Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Coordinator **Ozawa Giniw Ikwe** (Yellow Eagle Woman), or in English **Carol McCorrister**. Carol is a member of the Peguis First Nation and has worked in both the social and health services sectors since 1987.

She holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Manitoba and brings over 30 years of experience ranging from an addiction specialist, case management, intake processing, coordinated crisis response, and program development and management.

Carol has worked for southern First Nation community agencies, such as Peguis CFS, West Region CFS and the Southern First Nations Network of Care, and most recently with Southeast Resource Development Council in the Health department as Mental Wellness Program Manager.

During this time she also served as a Co-Chair on the Manitoba First Nations Wellness Advisory Community.

Welcome Carol!





## New Faces at SCO (continued)



We also welcome **Desiree Martin** to the role of Executive Assistant with the Grand Chiefs' Office. Desiree Martin is a turtle-clan member from Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation.

She began her professional life by volunteering for various community initiatives and was a member of the RRAFN Youth Council, which gave her the confidence to set her sights as high as possible. That approach led her to run for Chief and Council in 2009. Later, Desiree was appointed Secretary/Board Member for Niichi and Kiinu Gaming Centres at 24 years old and served a two-year term.

She worked in emergency management for over ten years, eventually earning a place as Coordinator of the program before deciding to permanently relocate to Winnipeg in 2017.

We are excited to have these amazing women as part of our growing team!

## JOIN OUR TEAM

SCO is always seeking qualified individuals to join us in our mission of creating positive outcomes for all our relations. We have a couple of great opportunities to share at this time:

Vaccination Clinic Indigenous Liaison  
Jordan's Principle Coordinator - Winnipeg School Division

Jobs can be viewed at <https://scoinc.mb.ca/category/careers/>





## Contact Us:

PHONE: (204) 946-1869

FAX: (204) 946-1871

TOLL FREE: 1-866-876-9701

EMAIL: [receptionist@scoinc.mb.ca](mailto:receptionist@scoinc.mb.ca)

Website: [www.scoinc.mb.ca](http://www.scoinc.mb.ca)

### **On-Reserve Head Office**

Swan Lake First Nation  
200-200 Alpine Way  
Headingley, Manitoba R4H 0B7

### **Winnipeg Sub-Office**

1572 Dublin Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3E 0L4

For media inquiries, please email [media@scoinc.mb.ca](mailto:media@scoinc.mb.ca)