

# National Circle Newsletter

For Indigenous Agriculture & Food

NEWS

UPDATE



## NCIAF Holds Inaugural Annual General Meeting

Last week, the NCIAF held its first Annual General Meeting, bringing together the board of directors, advisory circle, partners, and special guests. President & CEO Kallie Wood emphasized the potential economic impact of Indigenous participation in agriculture. *"NCIAF helps our First Nations People rekindle their relationship with agriculture, aiming for a \$1.5 billion boost in primary agriculture,"* she stated.

The meeting featured a Pipe Ceremony, symbolizing collective prayer, the start of discussions, and sealing of friendships followed by a performance from the Lone Creek Drum Group. Attendees watched special video messages from The Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, and The Honourable Minister MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Justine Hendricks, President and CEO of FCC, and Jane Halford, FCC's Board Chairperson, announced FCC's commitment to donate \$1 million annually for five years to support the Circle's foundation. *"NCIAF is critical to placing Indigenous knowledge at the center of Canada's Agriculture and Food future,"* said Hendricks. Kristjan Hebert, President of Hebert Group, concluded, *"Collaboration is key to the future of Canadian Agriculture. NCIAF will show how Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners can find and implement pathways to success."*

The event marked a promising start for NCIAF's mission to integrate Indigenous knowledge and practices into Canada's agricultural landscape, promoting sustainability, equity, and reconciliation.

[Read the full article](#)



Lone Creek Drum Group: Performing the Honor Song

# CEO'S REPORT

## Special message from our CEO



Tansi Friends and Partners,

It is with great honor and pride that we mark a milestone in our journey, the creation of the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food and our first of many newsletters. This newsletter is designed to provide valuable articles, information and events to help connect Indigenous Peoples and communities with the agricultural industry, government, academia and other like-minded non-profits.

While I've had the privilege of leading this great team and organization for nearly six months, I continue to be amazed at the excitement and interest of each person I meet in my travels. It's been a very busy few months as we've prepared to launch the NCI AF, and the enthusiasm of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders is limitless. As the first farmers of this land, we are committed to helping our First Nations People rekindle their relationship with agriculture. This effort represents a significant economic boost and promotes equitable, sustainable growth.

I am thrilled to announce the launch of the National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food (NCIAF). On June 10, 2024, a sacred Pipe Ceremony at the First Nations University of Canada marked the beginning of our mission to unlock Indigenous agriculture's full potential in Canada.

The NCI AF is an Indigenous-led, non-profit organization dedicated to re-igniting Indigenous involvement in the Canadian agriculture and food industry. Our mission is to empower Indigenous communities to reclaim food sovereignty and build successful agriculture and food businesses.

By addressing systemic barriers, we aim to enhance food security and economic prosperity for Indigenous communities and support Canada in becoming a world leader in sustainable food production. The NCI AF brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to create a more promising future through collaboration, partnership, and knowledge sharing.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to nourish our nations and empower generations.

Thank you, hiy hiy,

Kallie Wood

President and CEO, National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture and Food



# Success Stories Across Canada



## Ochapowace First Nations Community Garden

In early March, Lester Henry from Ochapowace First Nation and the Kehteyak Committee identified starting a community garden as a key step toward progress. This initiative aims to reconnect youth with traditional practices, involve elders, and supply healthy produce locally. Planning began in April with Government of Saskatchewan's Horticultural Specialist Connie Achtymichuk and lead gardener Val Kinistino, who is passionate about engaging youth in gardening.

Groundwork started on May 22, aided by grant applications, community support, and a neighboring farmer's assistance. A significant milestone was marked on May 27 with a planting ceremony led by Val and Tristan Isaac, featuring prayer, drumming, and singing. Elder Errol Kinistino shared his cherished memories of family gardens, emphasizing their cultural and sustenance value:

*"Our mother and father grew a really nice, big garden back in Ochap First Nation. I remember how much work it was, but as a family, it wasn't so big. We had garden produce all winter long. Now the garden is part of our life; my dad, my brothers, and my sisters nurturing that garden as a community, family garden. That food was so good."*

We look forward to sharing more updates on this project in upcoming newsletters and wish the Ochapowace First Nation good growing conditions heading into summer.

[Read the full article](#)



Still frame from video of Errol Kinistino at the Ochapowace First Nation Community Garden Planting ceremony on May 27.

[1] Kehteyak Committee consists of the nation's elders who are 65 years or older

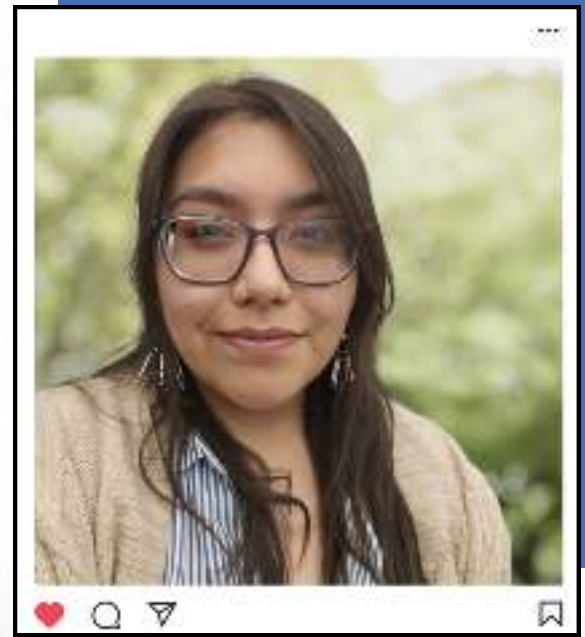
# Navigating Media Landscapes: Get to Know Our Communications Pro

By: *Tianna George-Peepeetch, NCIAF Student Intern*

This month, we're thrilled to introduce **Justice Acoose**, our Communications Specialist who joined us in May. With a keen eye for emerging trends and a knack for adapting to ever-evolving communication channels, Justice is taking the helm of our social media sites.

Justice brings a wealth of experience in digital marketing and social media management, known for her innovative strategies and creative content, Justice is set to enhance our online presence and connect us with a broader audience.

To help you get to know her better, we sat down with Justice for a brief Q&A. Here are her responses:



## **Tell us a little about yourself and your position with the NCIAF?**

I'm a born and raised city-folk – I've always really enjoyed technology and figuring out how to further utilize different channels of communication to connect with people. My background knowledge from my hobby of building and maintaining an engaged social media following based on live commentary is what led to my role with the NCIAF as a Communications Specialist. My role is primarily focused on developing and executing social media strategies, but other aspects include oversight of the website, collaborating with other team members, and coordination of logistics for events.

## **What inspired you to join the NCIAF?**

The one driving factor in joining the NCIAF team was the President & CEO Kallie Wood, and the Senior Vice President of Business Development Chris McKee. I've admired Kallie and Chris for their leadership and communication styles, and I knew I'd enjoy the work-culture because of the already established trust and reliability. Another reason I was eager to work for the NCIAF was to reclaim and deepen my Indigenous roots, since I grew up in a non-traditional environment.

## **What have you found to be the best part of working with the NCIAF so far?**

The best part of working for the NCIAF is knowing I am contributing to a better future for Indigenous people. The work our team does gives me gratification, and I'm always in awe of the connections and the steps the team is making towards reconciliation. I'm very proud to say I work for the NCIAF and get to be a part of something so incredible.



Words that Inspire

# Highlights

## from our community

### Client Testimonial:



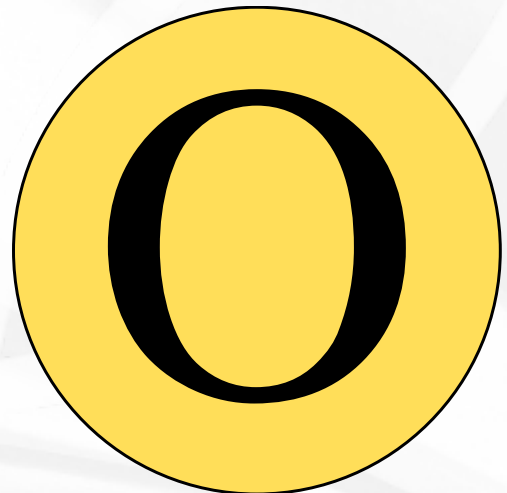
“NCIAF is the organization I didn't know I needed! From important connections to industry knowledge, the team has given me the tools and direction I needed to work on scaling up my business with confidence. I am happy to report that I am moving into a federally licensed facility so I can work on bringing miskamasowin bannock mix to grocery stores across Turtle Island.”

-**Felicia Dewar**, Founder of Miskamasowin Foods Inc.

“On behalf of Ochapowace First Nation and our Kehteyak, I thank National Circle for Indigenous Agriculture & Food for their support and leadership on this project.

In particular, we wish to acknowledge and thank the team for their leadership in helping make this idea a reality. In spite of a few first year challenges, we believe this little project is going to be a leader for much bigger food production business opportunities for our Nation.”

-**Lester Henry**, Chair of Ochapowace Kehteyak Committee





## Event highlights

### [2024 IFMA Next Gens Workshop July 4 - 7](#)

Location: Saskatoon, SK

### [Calgary Stampede July 5 - 14](#)

Location: Calgary, AB

### [Ag in Motion July 16-19](#)

Location: Langham, SK

### [Sioux Valley Dakota Nation FACTS Camp July 22-25\\*](#)

Location: Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

### [Indigenous Field Day at IHARF Aug 7](#)

Location: Indian Head, SK

\*Stay tuned for further details by following us on social media, or express your interest by emailing [kate@nciaf.ca](mailto:kate@nciaf.ca) to attend FACTS camp or IHARF.

## Stay Informed



Website: [nciaf.ca](http://nciaf.ca)

Address: 1 First Nations Way

Regina, SK S4S 7K2

Phone: 306-559-6098



## Partner Quote

HERE IS OUR FEATURED  
PARTNER OF THE MONTH



*"We are pleased to support the NCI AF as they work to advance Indigenous agriculture and the food sector by creating a national dialogue and supporting both business and capacity development for Indigenous Peoples."*

Chinyere Eni, Head of RBC Indigenous Banking

