

# 2024-25 **ANNUAL REPORT**

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Supporting Wellbeing



Cover Photos:  
Top and middle photos by Rachel Cluderay  
Bottom and background photos by Maxine Lacorne

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# CONTENTS

Who We Are.....	4
How We Work.....	5
Overview of the Past Year.....	6
What We Do.....	9
Highlights.....	17
Lessons Learned.....	22
In Numbers.....	24
Thank You!.....	26





# Who we are

Supporting Wellbeing (SWB) was established in 2020 to provide tools and resources for people who deliver land-based programming that will better prepare them to mitigate and respond to mental health challenges on the land.

We envision a future where Northern residents have access to on the land programs that are culturally affirming and trauma-informed, supporting and strengthening Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of life throughout the North.

SWB is guided by an Indigenous-led steering committee and advisory council with land-based leaders from across the Northwest Territories (NWT). SWB delivers a six module training that teaches people how to support their participants and staff on the land.

SWB was created to respond to the community-identified need for a made-in-the-north, trauma-informed, and culturally affirming training for people who deliver land-based programs. Since its inception, SWB has centred Indigenous approaches to wellbeing and is grounded in the experiences of northern land-based programmers.

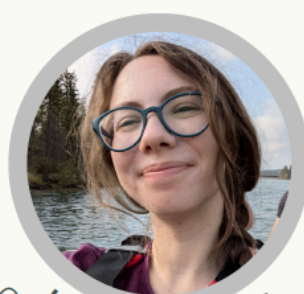
## Staff



Rachel Cluderay  
Project Director



Maxine Lacorne  
Project Coordinator



Katharine Thomas  
Communications Coordinator

# How we work

**Reciprocity:** with oneself, the Land, and each other

**Inclusiveness:** accepting, welcoming, and being intentional about diversity, and celebrating one's strengths

**Accountability:** mutual accountability to each other, the land, our partners, and ourselves

**Wellbeing:** mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual facets are balanced and nurtured

**Indigenous Self-Determination:** supporting Indigenous sovereignty, rights, and the value of Indigenous knowledge and ways of being.

## Advisory Council



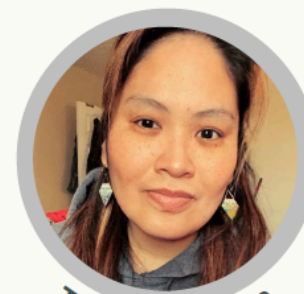
Mande McDonald



Tammy Steinwand



Brenda Dragon



Tanya Snowshoe

## Steering Committee



Jimmy Ruttan



Kristen Tanche



Brenda Ferdinand-Baton



Aneka Westergreen



# Overview of the past year





"A highlight for me was learning what is aftercare and what you do for that. And understanding how to approach someone who is in need."

-Dél̓nē Training Participant

"I will use what I've learned in this training to help me become much more of a better leader and role model."

-Tł̓chq̓ Jmbè Training Participant

Photo by Katharine Thomas

# What we do

## 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

Below is a summary of the 2024-2025 strategic plan activities. For a complete version of SWB's strategic plan, please visit [supportingwellbeing.ca](https://supportingwellbeing.ca)

### Strategic Direction #1

Planning for Operational Efficiency

### Strategic Direction #2

Communicating & Advocating for Benefits of Supporting Wellbeing

### Strategic Direction #3

Creating, Delivering, and Sustaining Innovative Curriculum

### Strategic Direction #4

Support Diverse Needs of Communities

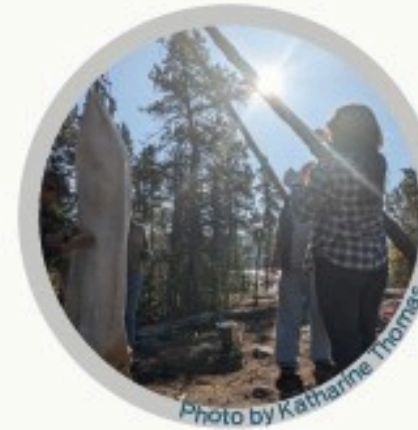


## Direction #1: Planning for Operational Efficiency

- Consultants completed the business plan for SWB, which was subsequently reviewed by the SC/AC, who then identified specific aspects to begin implementing
- Created a workplan and budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year
- Established and coordinated quarterly SC/AC meetings
- In July, our Project Coordinator position changed from part-time to full-time
- Implemented performance reviews for the Project Coordinator and Communications Coordinator
- Developed & implemented Human Resources Policies and Procedures
- Developed & implemented SWB Training Policies and Procedures for facilitators
- Developed Governance Policies that replaced the terms of reference for the SC/AC
- SWB continued to pursue sustainability and leveraged approximately \$580,000 from twelve contributing organizations to supplement the \$500,000 Arctic Inspiration Prize award received in 2021. In addition to this direct funding SWB received \$250 in donations, \$23,800 in fee-for-service revenue, and substantial in-kind support from partner organizations



- Professional Development for staff included:
  - Rachel completed the ICA Facilitator Client Collaboration training
  - Maxine completed the Community Crisis Response Train-the-Trainer with Thunderbird Foundation
  - Maxine completed the Wise Practices for Life Promotion training with Thunderbird Partnership Foundation
  - Kat completed the Indigenous Youth Roots' Communications & Outreach workshop
  - Kat and Rachel attended weekly Tłıchʔ language classes in partnership with Bushkids
  - Kat and Maxine participated in Knowledge Translation training from Hotii ts'eeda
  - Kat began the Strategies in Audience Analysis course at Simon Fraser University
  - Maxine and Kat completed Advanced Wilderness First Aid Training
  - Maxine attended Buffalo Riders Facilitator Training Maxine attended Trauma Support Training, run by Restoring Balance Consulting





## Direction #2: Communicating & Advocating for Benefits of SWB

- Created and implemented a digital communications plan and social media calendar
- Created social media post templates
- Increased frequency of social media posts, including:
  - Quotes from learners at past trainings
  - Posts about who and what SWB is and does
  - Regular updates on SWB activities
  - Cross-promotion of land-based and wellness initiatives across the north

- Had SWB stories shared in two news publications
- Updated our website monthly with blog posts about our trainings and other activities
- Performed a website audit
- Published our 2022-2024 annual report
- Presented, panelled, and/or hosted a workshop at multiple events:
  - Hoti ts'eeda's Elets'ehdee Gathering
  - National Summit on Indigenous Mental Health
  - National Mental Health Summit
  - NWT Recreation and Parks Association Annual Conference
  - Northern Youth Leadership's COLD Forum
  - Arctic Youth Conference
- Connected with Hoti ts'eeda and the Institute for Circumpolar Health Research to explore the development of a policy paper or academic research on the impact of SWB Training





## Direction #3: Creating, Delivering, & Sustaining Innovative Curriculum

- Ashley Okrainec and Rachel Cluderay delivered five-day SWB training in May at Camp Connections, in partnership with Qmmunity Camp and FFCNWT, to nine participants
- Ashley Okrainec was mentored from Facilitator-In-Training to Facilitator
- Hired by Tłıchq Government, SWB partnered with Jmbè Program staff to deliver a two-day, on the land training in June at North of 60 Aurora Adventures outside Sòmba K'è/Yellowknife, covering modules one, two, and four
- Maxine Lacorne was mentored by Rachel Cluderay to facilitate the SWB Training to the Tłıchq Government
- In partnership with Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Ashley Okrainec and Rachel Cluderay spent five days delivering the SWB Training in Łutsel K'e to nine participants
- We hosted our inaugural annual Facilitator Gathering where eight SWB facilitators came together in Sòmba K'è/Yellowknife for three days in October to provide feedback on the Facilitator Training curriculum and receive professional development to improve their facilitation skills
- Curriculum developers made changes to the Facilitator Training curriculum based on the feedback from the Facilitator Gathering
- In partnership with Tłıchq Government, Mande McDonald and Maxine Lacorne led nine staff from the Department of Culture & Lands Protection in a five day SWB Training at Burnt Island, outside Whatì, in January
- Maxine Lacorne, a Facilitator-In-Training, was mentored by Mande McDonald at the training on Burnt Island

- SWB coordinated a SWB Facilitator Training outside of Łíídlı Kúé/Fort Simpson at the new Cultural Tourism Centre. Mande McDonald and Wendy Lahey facilitated the Facilitator Training to eight SWB Facilitators-in-Training
- In March, SWB partnered with Délıne Got'ıne Government to deliver the SWB Training to eight Community Wellness Department staff members—marking an exciting milestone as Facilitator-in-Training Cole Hardisty was mentored by Rachel Cluderay to co-facilitate their very first training
- SWB collected evaluations from Facilitators-in-Training and SWB Training participants





## Direction #4: Supporting Diverse Needs of Communities

- Partnered with several organizations to deliver the Supporting Wellbeing training: Qmmunity Camp and Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories, Tłıchq Government, Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation, Délıne Got'ıne Government
- Invited facilitators from across the NWT to provide feedback on the Facilitator Training curriculum
- Secured \$39,700 from the NWT On The Land Collaborative to support land-based activities at each SWB Training and the Facilitator Training
- Initiated the creation of a resource list of emotional support people in each community/region

*"Each module including step-by-step recommendations & examples were all exactly what I needed. They're great modules and I'll definitely use, practice and rely on them."*

-Qmmunity Camp Participant

*"I will use the knowledge I've learned about signs of distress and grounding techniques. I will share what I've learned."*

-Whatı Training Participant

## HIGHLIGHTS





# Facilitator Training

Over the course of a week, starting in late-February, we hosted our second-ever **Facilitator Training** at Łíídlı́ Kúę First Nation's beautiful new Cultural Tourism Centre.

Eight participants from five NWT communities completed the training and became **Facilitators-in-Training** (FITs), ready to co-facilitate SWB Trainings with support from a Mentor. Throughout the training, FITs learned facilitation techniques and gained hands-on experience as they took turns facilitating activities from the SWB curriculum. Mentors **Wendy Lahey**, **Mandee McDonald**, **Rachel Cluderay**, and **Donald Prince** supported the FITs with facilitation, logistical, and emotional support.

**"It was great to practice facilitating, get help from mentor to figure out your materials, have a supportive group, and get feedback"**

-Facilitator Training Participant

We began and ended the training with a Feeding the Fire Ceremony led by **Gilbert and Mary Jane Cazon**, grounding our experience in Dehcho Dene culture and a recognition of the Land. We had beautiful weather and took advantage of the setting by facilitating outside and taking part in on the land activities including snowmobiling with the **Edézhíé Guardians** and gathering medicines with **Rosa Wright**. In the evenings, we bonded over sewing beaver mittens with guidance from **Louisa Morreau**, sharing stories, and preparing our facilitation plans for the next day.

The training was an overwhelming success that took into account a number of lessons learned from our first Facilitator Training, which was also held in Łíídlı́ Kúę back in 2022. It was inspiring to see the FITs improve throughout the training and come into their own as facilitators.

This training added eight new FITs and nearly doubled our capacity to deliver SWB Trainings across the north. The impact was felt almost immediately when brand-new FIT **Cole Hardisty** facilitated a SWB Training in Délı̄ne just one week later!



# Qmmunity Camp Training

We were thrilled to launch our first **SWB Training** of the fiscal year in partnership with **Qmmunity Camp** and the **Foster Family Coalition**. Over five transformative days, our facilitators, **Ashley Okrainec** and **Rachel Cludery**, led a journey through all six modules of the training. The training was delivered to nine participants from multiple NWT communities, all of whom support or deliver land-based programming.

Held at the beautiful **Camp Connections** site—nestled about 60km from Sõmba K'è/Yellowknife on the sandy shore of the Cameron River—the setting was as impactful as the content. Participants stayed in cozy, woodstove-heated cabins and were nourished by the amazing meals prepared by Bernie, whose cooking quickly became a highlight of the experience!

Throughout the week, **Maixne Lacorne** provided vital emotional support, holding space and helping create an environment where participants felt safe to explore challenging topics like **Intergenerational Trauma** and **Suicide Intervention**. These heavy but necessary conversations were grounded in land-based healing, with moments of connection outdoors that helped everyone process, reflect, and recharge.

**"I will use this training in my role on the land by centring the strength of participants, myself, and others."**

-Qmmunity Camp Training Participant

We also had the joy of learning from **Lila Erasmus**, who led us on a medicine walk and taught us how to make traditional medicines to take home. One afternoon, the group split up—some headed off for a scenic hike to **Cameron Falls**, while others stayed behind to create beautiful beaver hats and mitt strings led by **Lindsay Debassige**.

It was a week filled with learning, laughter, reflection, and deep connection to both land and community. We're so grateful to our partners and participants for making this training a truly unforgettable experience.





# Lessons learned

One of the most beautiful parts of this work is that it's always evolving. Each challenge we face becomes an opportunity to grow, adapt, and better support our staff, facilitators, and participants. Here are some of the key lessons we've learned this year—and how we're putting them into action.

## 1 Land-Based Activities: Essential, Not Optional

Land-based activities are central to the SWB Training. They offer participants space to process difficult topics in a healing, grounded space. Facilitators have noticed a significant difference in the quality of the training when land-based activities are well-planned and prioritised versus when they are planned last minute. While our partners recognize their value, we know time and capacity can be barriers to planning these components.

To keep land-based activities at the heart of our approach, we're:

- Clearly communicating their importance early in the planning process
- Requiring that they be confirmed in advance
- Offering hands-on support to help partners coordinate when needed

These changes will ensure we can uphold the integrity of the training while easing the load for our partners.

## 2 Expanding Our Facilitator Team

Like last year, a major challenge has been having enough facilitators to meet the growing demand for trainings. This year, we made a meaningful step forward: we trained eight new facilitators-in-training at our annual Facilitator Training!

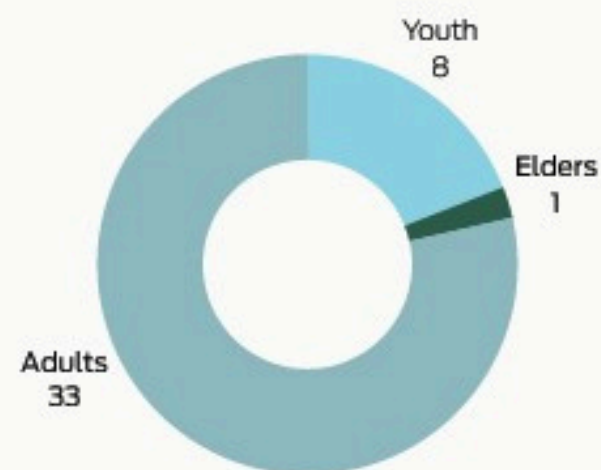
Over the next two years, we'll be mentoring this incredible group so they can become fully independent facilitators. This expanded team will give us more capacity to deliver trainings and respond to the increasing need for Supporting Wellbeing across communities.



Photo by Rachel Cluderay



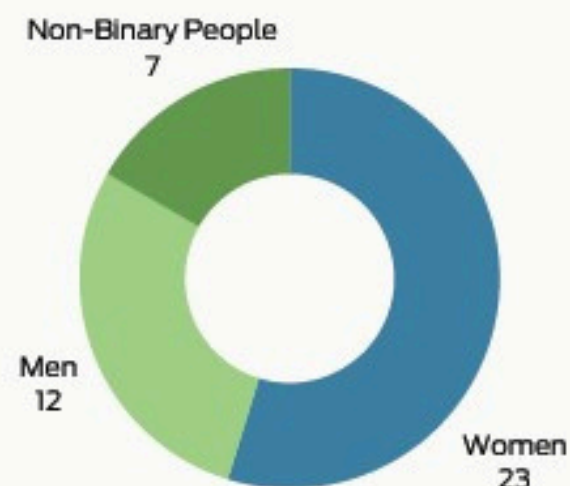
# In numbers



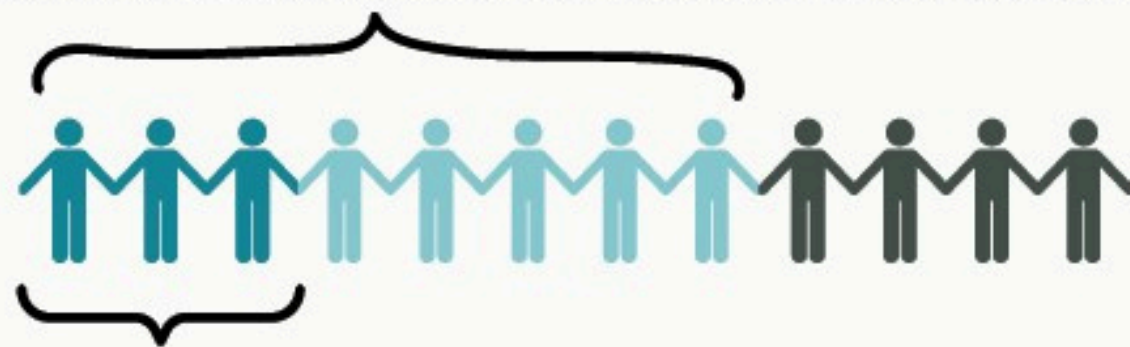
**42** people completed SWB Training

**19** participants expressed interest in becoming a SWB facilitator

**97%** of participants felt the training objectives were met



**Eight** people became Facilitators-in-Training, making **twelve** FITs in total



**Three** Facilitators-in-Training were mentored





## Mársı | kinanāskomitin | Thank you | Merci Haj' | Quana | Qujannamiik | Quyanainni Máhsı | Máhsı | Mahsı

We owe our successful years to the dedication of our Steering and Advisory Committees, staff, partners, and many invaluable contractors! Thank you to our funders and sponsors who make our work possible. We are looking forward to another great year ahead!

### Steering Committee

Jimmy Ruttan (co-chair), Inuvialuit Regional Corporation  
Kristen Tanche (co-chair), Dehcho First Nations  
Brenda Ferdinand-Baton, Sahtú Dene Council  
Anneka Westergreen, GNWT Department of Health and Social Services

### Advisory Council

Mandee McDonald, Dene Nahjo  
Tammy Steinwand, Tłıchq Government  
Brenda Dragon, South Slave Representative  
Tanya Snowshoe, Gwich'in Representative

### Staff

Rachel Cluderay, Project Director  
Maxine Lacorne, Project Coordinator  
Katharine Thomas, Communications Coordinator



Photo by Cole Hardisty



Photo by Zain Ali



Photo by Katharine Thomas

### Partners

Arctic Inspiration Prize  
Canadian Women's Foundation  
Dehcho First Nations  
Délıne Got'ıne Government  
Dene Nahjo  
Foster Family Coalition  
GNWT Department of Health and Social Services  
Hotı ts'eeda  
Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation  
Łııdlı Kúé First Nation  
Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation  
Makeway Foundation  
McConnell Foundation  
Nature United  
Northern Youth Leadership  
NWT On The Land Collaborative  
Qmmunity Camp  
Sahtú Dene Council  
Thaidene Nene National Park  
Tłıchq Government  
Yellowknife Community Foundation



Photo by Zain Ali



Photo by Steph Woodworth





Photo by Katharine Thomas

## Request a Training

Apply now to bring  
culturally-relevant  
mental health training  
to your community



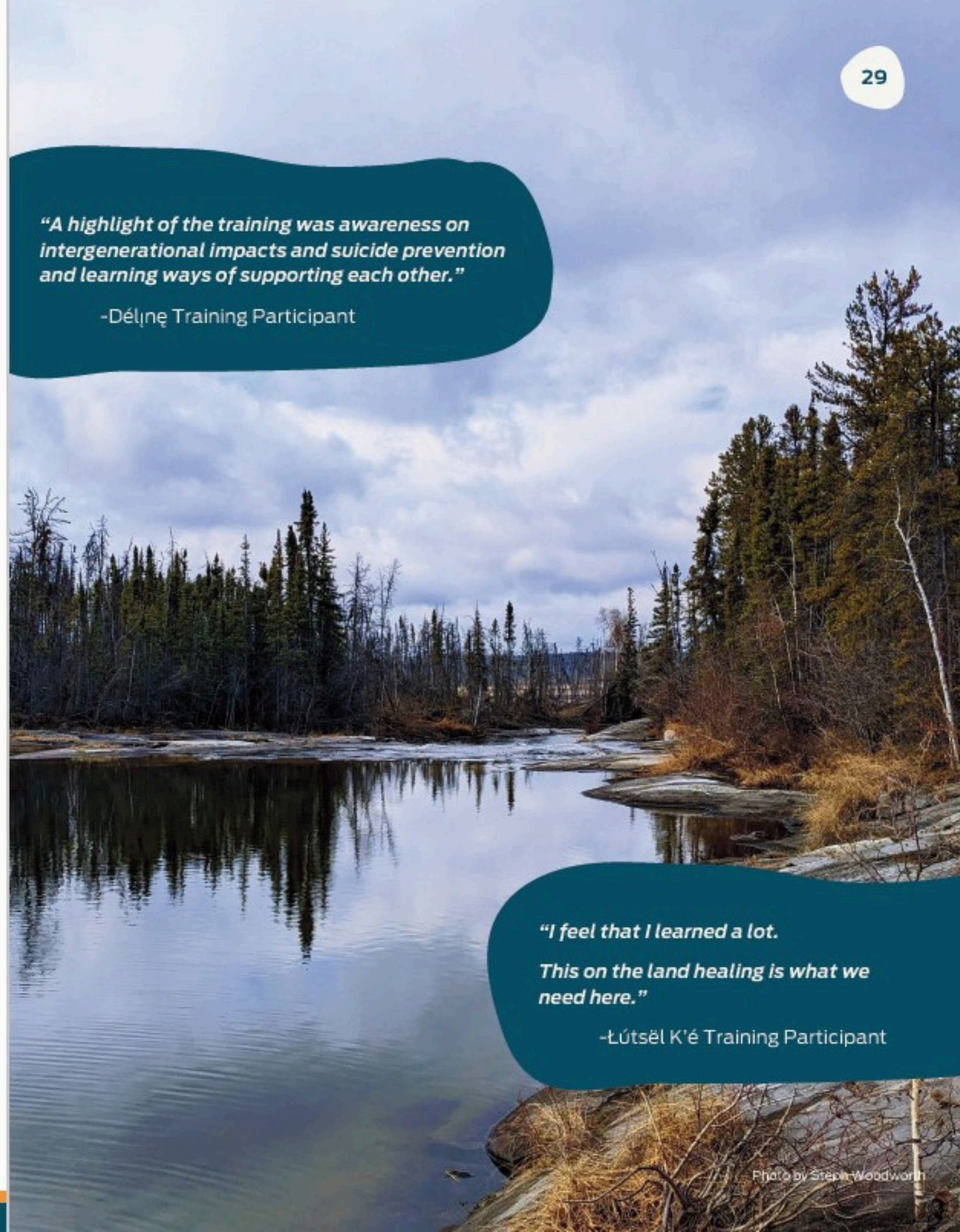
## Donate!



If you appreciate our work,  
please consider making a  
donation.

*"A highlight of the training was awareness on  
intergenerational impacts and suicide prevention  
and learning ways of supporting each other."*

-Dél̃nē Training Participant



*"I feel that I learned a lot.*

*This on the land healing is what we  
need here."*

-Łútsēl K'ē Training Participant

Photo by Stephen Woodworth





**Supporting Wellbeing**  
**A Project on Makeway Shared Platform**  
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