



# 2024 Annual Report



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# MESSAGE FROM THE TRACKS TEAM

## Aaniin!

2024 was a year of momentum, clarity, and growth at TRACKS. With our new program model—divided into School Programs, Youth Programs, and Camp Programs—fully in place for a full year, we’ve seen just how much more capacity and impact this structure brings. It’s helped us deepen our relationships, strengthen our delivery, and expand what’s possible across all areas of our work.

This year, our School Programs continued to flourish. We ran a growing number of hands-on, land-based workshops with students and educators, sharing Indigenous and Western knowledge systems in creative, engaging ways. While we offered fewer digital literacy workshops this year, we doubled down on in-person engagement and were proud to meet increased demand from schools across the region.

In our Youth Programs, we were thrilled to run our for-credit Oshkwazin Trailblazer program for a second year. With more youth participating than ever before, the Trailblazer program continues to be a transformative opportunity—blending employment, leadership development, and credit-earning education in a way that’s truly unique to TRACKS. Summer 2024 was one of our most exciting seasons to date. With a larger and more skilled camp staff team, we were able to offer more Camp Programs than ever before—from on-campus programming to First Nations-based camps and custom summer events. This growth not only allowed us to reach more youth, but to do so with even greater care, creativity, and consistency.

Behind every workshop, camp, and initiative is a team of passionate and dedicated people. To our staff, volunteers, Steering Team, Advisory Circle, and placement students—thank you for your brilliance and heart. And to our funders, sponsors, and donors—thank you for your continued trust and investment in this work. Your support makes TRACKS possible. We’re proud to share this year’s report with you. It’s a snapshot of what can happen when strong relationships, shared knowledge, and youth leadership come together.

Miigwech for walking with us in 2024—and here’s to everything that’s still to come in 2025!

# ABOUT TRACKS

TRACKS is an experiential program hosted by Trent University within the Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program (IESS), and operates in collaboration with founding partner organization Kawartha World Issues Centre (KWIC) and the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL).



## PURPOSE STATEMENT

TRACKS facilitates dynamic, land-based youth programming that braids multiple scientific approaches by centering Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

## PROGRAM INTENTIONS

-  To offer youth opportunities to actively engage with a multitude of worldviews to further understand and develop their personal skills, gifts, and tools.
-  To contribute to hands-on InSTEAM (Indigenous Science Technology Engineering Art and Math) learning opportunities from the elementary to post-secondary level.
-  To facilitate spaces where intergenerational knowledge can be shared and mentoring relationships can be nurtured.
-  To provide spaces where youth can be empowered to build relationships, learn together, and grow as leaders while honouring their diverse identities and backgrounds.
-  To encourage youth to deepen reciprocal relationships within their environments and embody understandings of their responsibilities to the land.
-  To collaborate with Indigenous Peoples, school boards and community organizations to strengthen relationships and activate culturally responsive learning opportunities.
-  To foster meaningful employment and volunteer experiences for young people interested in land-centric and InSTEAM work

# TRACKS

## STEERING TEAM

The Steering Team provides advice and direction to TRACKS to support the delivery and development of TRACKS School Programs, Camp Programs and Youth Programs, as well as to ensure long-term trust and continuity in the leadership of the program.

**Chris Furgal** (Co-Director, Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program)

**Sam Rockbrune** (Executive Director, Kawartha World Issues Centre: Jan – Sep)

**Margaret Zou** (Executive Director, Kawartha World Issues Centre: Oct – Dec)

**Kelli Marshall** (Indigenous Enrolment Advisor, First Peoples House of Learning)

## MIIGWECH!

We would like to share our best wishes to **Sam Rockbrune** as she moves from her role with KWIC and TRACKS Steering Team. Sam provided key support and leadership to TRACKS, as well as helped strengthen the relationship and collaboration between our organizations. **Gichi Miigwech Sam!**

We also wish to welcome **Margaret Zou** as the new Executive Director of KWIC and member of TRACKS Steering Team. Her experience and passion for the environment, its relationship with health and the importance of connecting youth with these issues strongly align with TRACKS. We are confident Margaret will help guide TRACKS in this new phase.

# TRACKS

## ADVISORY CIRCLE

The TRACKS Advisory Circle is a group of community members who bring unique perspectives, skills and knowledges to advise and inform the direction of TRACKS programs. Over the last 14 years, TRACKS has grown larger in impact and reach than was ever imagined, but the program has never swayed from its original vision and practice, to offer culturally-relevant, land-based programming to youth interested in the braiding of multiple sciences and worldviews.

The Advisory Circle represents the incredibly supportive and knowledgeable community which has surrounded the program for the last decade. We extend our deepest thanks to them for their continued involvement.



# THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS

## Youth Engagement

3,767

Total # of youth engaged

227

# of Indigenous youth

151

# of workshops for youth

## Educator & Parent Engagement

470

# of educators in workshops

326

# of classroom teachers or educators engaged

90

# of parents engaged

## Employee Engagement

30

Total # of staff employed

23

# of Indigenous staff employed

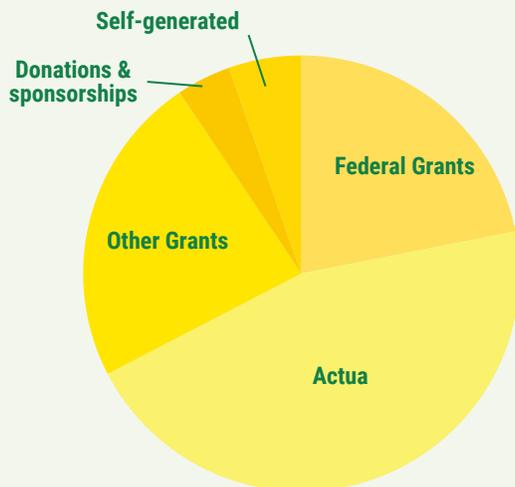
9

# of University students employed

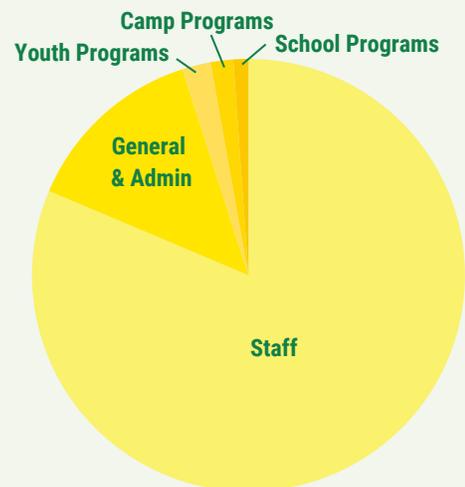
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# of Highschool students employed

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



Actua	45.5%	\$152,293
Other Grants	23.1%	\$77,623
Federal Grants	21.9%	\$73,318
Self-Generated	5.4%	\$17,969
Donations & Sponsorships	4.1%	\$13,585

Staff & Personnel Related	81.4%	\$248,757
General & Administration	13.7%	\$41,900
Youth (Oshkwazin) Programs	2.1%	\$6,498
Camp Programs	1.7%	\$5,142
School Programs	1.1%	\$3,437

# THIS YEAR'S IMPACT

In 2024, we worked directly with our staff to create evaluation activities that would help us understand our programs and its impact. This has informed our training and programming, making them more aligned with TRACKS vision of teaching youth that Indigenous Knowledge and the science they normally learn at school can work together, as well as empowering youth to become environmental leaders in their communities.

## TRAILBLAZERS

### The top 3 leadership skills they grew with us



Collaboration



Communication



Problem solving



### The top 3 new leadership skills they acquired



Project management



Supporting others



Communication

### Our Trailblazers had an increase of...

19%

in their confidence in their leadership skills

23%

in their confidence in their skills in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)

13%

in their confidence in their leadership skills to solve environmental problems

12%

in the likelihood of them studying a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)

# THIS YEAR'S IMPACT

## CAMPS

After the camp with TRACKS..



48%

of campers increased their understanding of STEM



61%

of campers shared an Indigenous story they learned with us



70%

of parents **strongly agreed** their campers learned about their relationship with nature and why it matters



65%

of parents **strongly agreed** their campers learned about multiple science systems, including Indigenous Knowledges

The top 3 things campers liked the most about camp



Games



Animal visits & activities



Arts & Crafts



The top 3 things parents liked the most about camp



Outdoor activities



Indigenous Knowledge



Fun & educational

# THIS YEAR'S IMPACT

## SCHOOLS



70%

of teachers **strongly agreed** their students enjoyed the workshop



76%

of teachers **strongly agreed** students learned about multiple science systems, including Indigenous Knowledges



93%

of teachers are interested in working with TRACKS again

Starting this school year, we designed and implemented evaluation activities for our school workshops to learn if students learned Indigenous Knowledge, how Indigenous Knowledge and science can work together, their attitudes and understanding of STEM.

### After our school workshops..



188

students said they are more interested in STEM

339

students said they know more about STEM



336

students said they learned Indigenous Knowledge with us



295

students said they learned how Indigenous Knowledge and science can work together

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 SCHOOL PROGRAMS

2024 was an incredible year for our School Programs. Our Instructors travelled throughout the Peterborough region to deliver workshops to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. From Kindergarten all the way to University level, we taught them about STEM, Indigenous Knowledge, and braiding these two knowledge systems together. We used coding, Anishinaabemowin, and the land to create fun, experiential programming!

Thanks to funding from Actua via the Government of Canada's Cancode program, we were able to offer Indigenous science & digital skills-based workshops barrier-free (i.e. at absolutely NO COST) to schools and groups in the Peterborough area. Miigwech to Actua and the Government of Canada for this impactful funding!

Manoomin Coding Connections and the Hawk & Hare Unplugged Coding Game have quickly become favourites with teachers in the Peterborough area, who also recognize the importance of acknowledging the intersections between these two broad ways of knowing. These workshops are full of fun and experiential learning, allowing students to come away from the workshops with new knowledge and greater confidence in their digital skills.



“Our Grade 5/6 class really enjoyed the unplugged coding workshop! The instructors were engaging, knowledgeable and really made the experience fun for the students. Overall, it was a great learning experience with opportunities for hands-on learning and meaningful conversations around the connection between science and Indigenous knowledge.”



“I think it’s amazing TRACKS is doing these programs for our youth! Even all as adults today during the workshop, we were able to learn and grow from the experience! The instructors were more than helpful and inviting! Thank you! We are going to continue to spread ‘braiding’! Miigwech!”



“Where do I begin to explain this amazing program? From start to finish they engaged the students and they loved the learning. The way it was broken up into parts so the students were able to explore/learn and then practice their learning was excellent. I can’t wait to book another one! Thank you for this experience.”

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 SCHOOL PROGRAMS

TRACKS partnered with the Trent School of Education to bring coding training to their teacher-candidates. TRACKS staff helped demystify coding and demonstrated how coding can be taught outdoors and unplugged!

We also worked with the TEACH Outside the Box program, a unique opportunity for teacher candidates and community educators to participate in a series of interactive workshops centred around social justice. TRACKS shared their knowledge of Indigenous ways of teaching and knowing and hosted a community placement student.



“The Manoomin coding connections activity is an excellent way to bring coding & Anishnaabemowin together. It was very cool to experience both, working out how to code the ozobot while learning new words and their meanings and backgrounds.”

This year, TRACKS spoke at the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) Conference at Camp Kawartha. We had the opportunity to speak to outdoor educators from all across Ontario about the importance of incorporating multiple knowledge systems into teaching practices. Through experiential activities, educators learned how knowledge systems can be braided together and how to centre Indigenous ways of knowing.



“Working at TRACKS has been so great and beneficial to my personal and professional growth! [...]”

It is such important work, because it can truly make a difference especially in the lives of Indigenous youth - they can see themselves and I think that is TRACKS greatest accomplishment!

I only wish I could have seen my culture positively integrated with science as a youth myself!”



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 CAMP PROGRAMS

In 2024, TRACKS Camp Programs ran two P.A. Day camps, a March Break Camp and two 5-day long summer camps for 6-to-12 year old kids! During our camps, we explained how Indigenous Knowledge and Western science can work together. For example, we ran our Ode'imín (strawberry) workshop, where we shared Ode'imín teachings and did a strawberry DNA extraction experiment. Another activity we did was our Mishiikēnh (turtle) workshop, where we shared Mishiikēnh teachings, observed different turtle shells, learned about their ecosystems and did turtle crafts with recyclable materials.



“It was great to see the connections my kids made with Nature and our languages. They were teaching me at the end of the day about words and systems and how we are all interconnected.”



“The camp was an enriching experience for my children, incorporating nature, STEM & indigenous based programming & content.

It was safe, stimulating and engaging space for the children participating.

Conventional programming in schooling could not have provided the same opportunity for a connection to nature, the land & science.”



“My daughter had an amazing time! For a child who mostly says her days are “good” she came home filled with stories and wanting to replicate some of the amazing science activities she did.”

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 CAMP PROGRAMS

As we do every year, TRACKS hosted camps in First Nation communities near Peterborough. This year we visited Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and Curve Lake First Nation. In these camps we ran different activities where campers learned about coding and Anishinaabemowin, about the relationships between different beings in an ecosystem, about the Three Sisters, among other themes.



**Miigwech**  
To the guests that came to our different camps. Zhaawnong Webb who share Fire Teachings with us, The Eyrie: Birds of Prey who taught us about different birds of prey and let our campers meet them in person and Green Up who shared tips on bike safety with our campers.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 YOUTH PROGRAMS

In 2024, TRACKS ran a handful of exciting and immersive Youth Programs including a Beading Workshop at the Indigenous Women's Symposium, our River Race game at both the Peterborough Children's Water Festival and the Haliburton-Muskoka-Kawartha Children's Water Festival, our Toppling Towers game in the Lessons of The Land event organized by the New Canadian Centre and a Cultural Connections event in collaboration with KPRDSB, Curve Lake First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation. We were also present at the Urban Indigenous Health Fair where we connected with Indigenous Youth around Nogojiwanong.

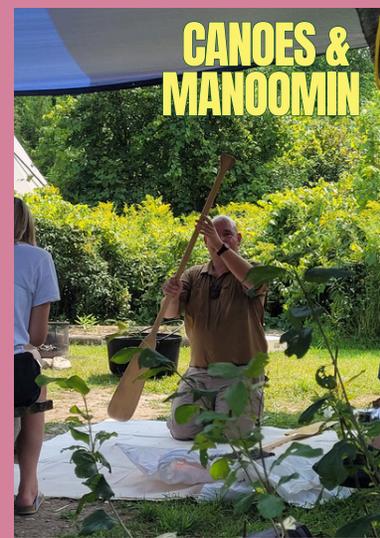
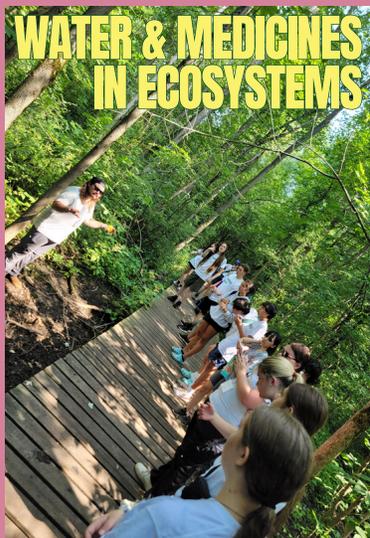
As part of the Youth Circle for Mother Earth, TRACKS, Ontario Nature, Plenty Canada and Walpole Island First Nation planned and hosted a 3-day YCME Youth Summit event for a group of young environmental leaders. TRACKS facilitated a Cultural Humility workshop at the event.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024 YOUTH PROGRAMS

During the summer of 2024, our Youth Programs team grew with the addition of 9 Indigenous high school Trailblazers! Our Trailblazer Summer Employment program provides part-time summer employment for Indigenous youth during July and August. During their time as a Trailblazer, they receive teachings and mentorship from TRACKS staff, local Indigenous Elders, and Knowledge Holders.

By the end of the summer, the youth took some of the knowledge they learned, and with support from TRACKS staff, they paired up to prepare one of four Trailblazer Land Camps for other Indigenous youth in their community. All land camps are based around a Traditional Knowledge topic with teachings shared by an invited Elder or Knowledge Holders, as well as a craft or hands-on activity. In 2024, the topics were:



*“Really fun. I learned a lot about my culture and nature. I feel more confident in my leadership skills and feel more confident speaking with people”*

- 2024 Trailblazer

## TRAILBLAZERS & ACTUA

Our Trailblazers were eligible for a high school course credit (GPP30) through the Ontario Ministry of Education via our network membership with Actua, taking an important step towards their futures as leaders in their communities!



# THE TRACKS TEAM

## SEASONAL STAFF



**ZIGWAN LAPOINTE**  
Summer Camp  
Programs Coordinator



**DIONOVAN GROSBECK**  
Youth Programs  
Coordinator



**JAJDA PONCE**  
Trailblazer Program  
Supervisor



**KELSEY ROOTE**  
School Programs  
Instructor



**GWEKANMAD PITAWANAKWAT**  
School Programs  
Instructor



**JESSICA COOK**  
School Programs  
Instructor



**LAUREN MACLACHLAN**  
School Programs  
Instructor



**TANEZ SANDERS-NAKOGEE**  
School Programs  
Instructor



**ABBEY MCINTYRE**  
Summer Camp & School  
Programs Instructor



**CHEYENNE JACOBS-CULKEEN**  
Summer Camp  
Programs Instructor & Supervisor



**AINSLEY DUNN**  
TEACH Outside the Box / Summer  
Camp Programs Instructor



**CAITLIN CHIBLOW**  
Summer Camp  
Programs Instructor



**TALIA WEALER**  
Summer Camp  
Programs Instructor



**SUMMER GAUTHIER**  
Summer Camp  
Programs Instructor



**BROOKLYN MARSHALL**  
Junior Instructor



**LAILA MACKENZIE**  
Junior Instructor

# THE TRACKS TEAM

## SEASONAL STAFF



**CHARLIE KEWAQUADO**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**CHRISTOPHER WATSON**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**DAISY HEARD**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**KOLE MACKENZIE**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**LACHLYNN HARTWICK**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**LIAM CLEARWATER**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**PAYCE MARSHALL**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**KAILAH MARSHALL**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer



**MASON JOHNSON**  
Oshkwazin Trailblazer

## CORE STAFF



**RACHEL GILHAM**  
School Programs  
Coordinator



**MADISON LAURIN**  
Interim Director



**MONTSERRAT ESCOBEDO**  
Evaluation &  
Development Lead

## PLACEMENT STUDENTS

**PAKIN PONGPAIBOON**

**KIMBER GOODKEY**



# CHI MIIGWECH EVERYONE!



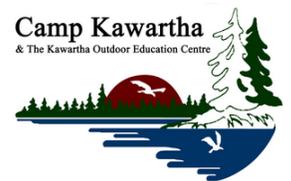


# Thank you for being a vital part of our programs

A network member of **actua**

Actua is a leading Canadian science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach organization. Each year, the Actua network engages over 500,000 youth in 600 communities across Canada in transformative STEM learning experiences that build critical skills and confidence. Please visit [www.actua.ca](http://www.actua.ca).

## 2024-25 Actua National Funders



# TRACKS YOUTH PROGRAM

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Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2  
705-748-1011 (ext. 6381)  
[www.tracksprogram.ca](http://www.tracksprogram.ca)  
[info@tracksprogram.ca](mailto:info@tracksprogram.ca)



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Kawartha World Issues Centre  
Connecting for Change