

DECEMBER 2023

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



**SURVIVORS'
SECRETARIAT**

Uncover. Document. Share.



Greetings from the Board of Directors and Secretariat Lead

The Board of Directors and Secretariat Lead are pleased to present our second annual report and audited financial statement.

It has been a busy year, and we have a great deal to share. We have continued our ground search work, pursued work with the Multijurisdictional Police Task Force and began our transition to a Coroner's investigation into the deaths of children who attended the Mohawk Institute. We have worked closely with Know History to search for records and documents associated with the 140+ years that the Institute operated, and we have been working with Animikii Technology solutions to create a home for the memories of the children contained in these records.

In addition to all of this we opened our office on Six Nations, hired our Secretariat Lead, a Director of IT, and a small team of staff to coordinate ground search and analysis work. We ensured we have wellness and cultural supports as well as put in place an outreach team that is working to communicate and bring together Survivors from the more than 56 communities who had their children taken and placed at the Mush Hole.

Survivors have travelled from one end of this country to the other, joining local, provincial, and national conversations all tied to *Bringing the Children Home*. As we have heard repeatedly, the truth has to be told and we need to do this so Survivors can get answers in their lifetime.

We are your Secretariat, and we are committed to ensuring we **uncover, document,** and **share** the truth about what happened. Please review our audit, annual report and feel free to reach out to us about how you too can become part of the work.

On behalf of us all, thank you for your ongoing support.

In Good Medicine,



SURVIVORS'
SECRETARIAT



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Survivors' Secretariat is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of seven Survivors of the Mohawk Institute. Member terms are for three years and extend from April 2021 - March 2025.



Roberta Hill

Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation



Tony Bomberry

Turtle Clan, Cayuga Nation



Sherlene Bomberry

Wolf Clan, Cayuga Nation



Diane Hill

Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation



Geronimo Henry

Bear Clan, Cayuga Nation



Dawn Hill

Turtle Clan, Mohawk Nation



John Elliot

Wolf Clan, Mohawk Nation



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To learn more about our Board of Directors please visit our website at: survivorssecretariat.ca/mandates/board-of-directors/



MOHAWK INSTITUTE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Opened: 1832 **Closed:** June 27, 1970

- Longest running Indian Residential School in Canada
- More than 15,000 Indigenous children attended from over 56* different Indigenous communities (Alberta, Quebec, Ontario)
- Over 600 acres associated with the former Institute
- Operations of the school spanned 140+ years
- The school was under the control of the New England Company, Anglican Church, and the Federal Canadian Government

*As of March 31, 2023



MISSION

The Survivors' Secretariat was established in 2021 to organize and support efforts to **uncover**, **document**, and **share** the truth about what happened at the Mohawk Institute during its 140+ years of operation.



Survivor-Led

The Survivors' Secretariat was formed by a small group of Survivors of the Mohawk Institute. We are a not-for-profit organization, with a Board of Directors comprised of Survivors. Our governance structure allows our Secretariat Lead to ensure the work of the Secretariat reflects the priorities of Survivors on all matters. Our mandate includes *Document Collection* and *Ground Search* activities requiring advanced archival research, along with the processing, storage and analysis of data collected. The mandate further extends to include our work tied to *Commemoration* and *Advocacy* activities associated with *Bringing the Children Home*.



Community-Involved

The importance of our work is anchored to truth telling and healing, which begins with family and community. Wherever possible we strive to ensure the work done is undertaken by Intergenerational Survivors and community members from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and communities impacted by the Mohawk Institute.

As a Secretariat we work with Survivors to lead conversations about the history and truth of the Mohawk Institute. We do this by hosting gatherings, Survivor Group meetings and guests from impacted communities. Throughout our work we aim to bring together Survivors, community members and young people whenever possible.



Trauma-Informed

The Survivors' Secretariat strives to take a trauma-informed approach to fulfilling our mandate and our four primary objectives (*Document Collection*, *Ground Search*, *Commemoration*, and *Advocacy*). We seek to create the conditions for each Survivor to share their truth or be witness to the truth telling of the children they attended the Mohawk Institute with. This is their journey, and we are here to support Survivors as they determine their path.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

To download our Audited Financial Statements for 2022-2023 scan the QR code to visit our website.

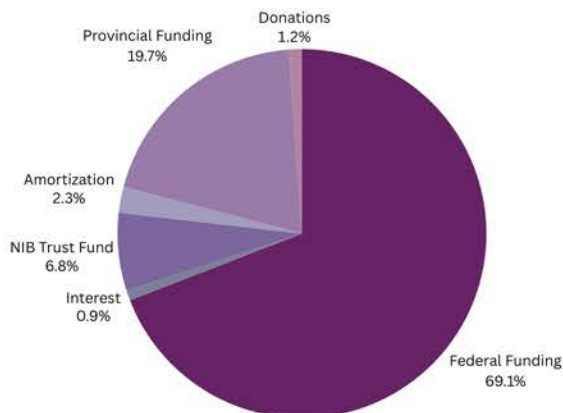


The Survivors' Secretariat began the work of *Bringing the Children Home* in the spring of 2021. By the fall, we were an incorporated not-for-profit.

The Secretariat is based on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, the largest First Nations community by population in Canada and is the closest community to the Mohawk Institute, located in Brantford, ON.

The Secretariat was approved for an initial federal funding package of \$10.3 million over three years (2021-2024), with supplementary funding from the Province of Ontario and the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) Trust Fund. Since the announcement amendments have been made to include additional funding.

Additional revenues are received through incurred interest payments and through donations.



| Revenue | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 (243 days) |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| Grants- Federal | \$1,998,386 | \$450,059 |
| Grants- Provincial | \$570,853 | \$790,955 |
| Grants- NIB Trust Fund | \$196,894 | - |
| Amortization Related to Capital Assets | \$65,429 | \$45,969 |
| Donations | \$34,058 | \$1,812 |
| Other Income | \$196 | - |
| Interest | \$25,817 | - |
| TOTAL | \$2,891,633 | \$1,288,795 |



ASSETS

The Survivors' Secretariat has capital assets which are amortized over the lifetime of the asset (see note 4). These include Leaseholder Improvements (\$120,712), Sonar Equipment (\$128,171), Computer Equipment (\$55,617), Security System (\$8,327).

| Assets | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Cash (Note 3) | \$4,460,931 | \$664,430 |
| Grant Receivable | \$100,000 | \$2,499,750 |
| Loan Receivable | \$50,000 | - |
| Government Receivable | \$15,229 | - |
| Prepaid Expense | \$1,268,611 | \$22,957 |
| Capital Assets (Note 4) | \$201,430 | \$208,479 |
| Intangible Assets | \$89,800 | \$25,200 |
| Total | \$6,186,001 | \$3,420,816 |

LIABILITIES

The Survivors' Secretariat's current liabilities include Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities (\$119,862) as well as Deferred Revenue (\$5,739,478) and Deferred Capital Contributions related to Capital Assets (\$291,229) and Unrestricted Net Assets or Donations (\$35,432). Liabilities total \$6,186,001 which accounts for all assets.

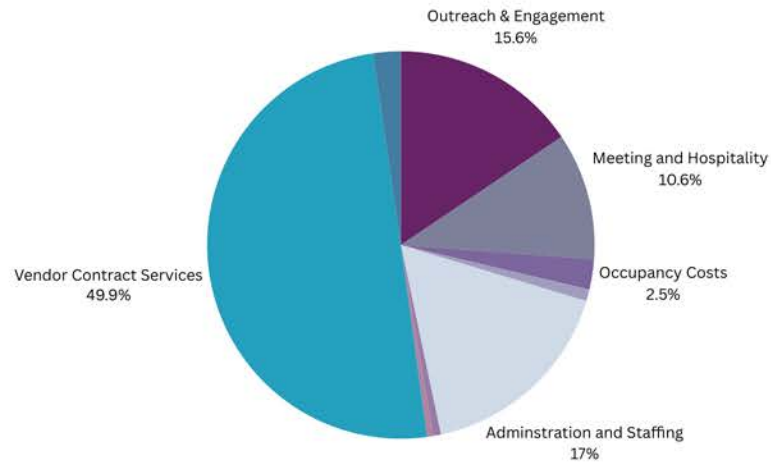
DEFERRED REVENUE

The path to **uncover, document, and share** the truth about what happened is an uncharted one. This has resulted in unused funding in the both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal years. The Secretariat has made a request to both Canada and Ontario to defer any unused funding to future years. The need to move funding forward was, in part, due to the Secretariat's inability to directly access funding until the Fall of 2022. This funding appears in Deferred Revenue (Note 7) of the audit.

| Deferred Revenue | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Deferred Grant Revenue, Beginning of the Year | \$1,979,089 | - |
| Net Grant Received/Receivable | \$6,649,501 | \$3,499,750 |
| Total | \$8,628,590 | \$3,499,750 |
| Grants Utilized in the Year | (\$2,889,112) | \$1,520,661 |
| Deferred Grant Revenue | \$5,739,478 | \$1,979,089 |

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

| Expense Category | 2022-2023 | 2021-2022 (243 days) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Outreach and Engagement Costs | \$444,847 | \$160,793 |
| Meetings and Hospitality | \$303,112 | \$43,965 |
| Occupancy Costs | \$72,242 | \$1,472 |
| Office | \$27,905 | \$9,829 |
| Administration and Staffing | \$486,038 | \$134,051 |
| Travel and Accommodations | \$18,461 | \$8,198 |
| Equipment and Rental | \$14,927 | \$59,830 |
| Vendor Contract Services | \$1,425,052 | \$822,876 |
| Amortization Expense | \$65,429 | \$45,969 |
| TOTAL | \$2,858,013 | \$1,286,983 |
| Excess Revenue over Expenses | \$33,620 | \$1,812 |



STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

Administration

- Hired 5 full-time contract employees
 - Secretariat Lead
 - IT Director
 - Ground Search Manager
 - GIS / GPR Analyst
 - Office Manager
- Hired 9 Seasonal contract employees
 - 6 youth employees
 - 2 Co-Ordinators
 - 1 Project Manager
- Moved into office in June 2022
 - Completed necessary renovations prior to move-in
 - Computer purchases
 - Installed security system
 - Secured insurance
- Interim Funding for the 2021-2022 year of \$1.3 million was fully repaid to the Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council in April of 2022

To download our Audited Financial Statements for 2022-2023 scan the QR code to visit our website.



STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

2022-2023 Strategic Highlights as of March 31, 2023

Ground Search

- 401 grids scanned with GPR
- 9.6 acres scanned
- 8 GPR Summer Students

Document Collection

- 30+ archives and other repositories identified with relevant information
- 20,000+ documents obtained
- 18,600+ documents reviewed
- ~15 researchers working on the portfolio each week

Commemoration

- 96 known student deaths
- 4,600 known students
- Co-hosted 1st Survivors of the Mohawk Institute Gathering with Mohawk Village Memorial Park and Woodland Cultural Centre
- Co-hosted Truth and Reconciliation Family Basket Giveaway with Six Nations of the Grand River

Advocacy

- Attended 5 conferences related to the search for unmarked burials
- Hosted 3 Indigenous Communities pursuing the search into unmarked burials and missing children
- 4 municipalities send letters of support for the release of documents relevant to the Mohawk Institute to Survivors' Secretariat



Ground Search

Data collected on 401 grids representing 1.5% of total search area



Document Collection

18,600 of the 20,000 NCTR records regarding Mohawk Institute reviewed and tagged



Known Students

4,600 students of the estimated 15,000 students identified through documentation

*Data valid as of March 31, 2023

Known Student

A "Known Student" is defined when documentation is found to support the child's attendance and/or death at the Mohawk Institute.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

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APRIL

- Board of Directors finalized and appointed for 3-year term.
- Funding agreements finalized with Canada and Ontario.
- GPR Training held for staff and volunteers
- The Mohawk Lake in Brantford, ON was searched by the MJPTF and Underwater Search Investigation Team.



MAY

- Recruitment began for the Reclaiming Our Role Summer Student program.
- Commemorative apple tree planting ceremony held with Survivors and local youth.
- Education Day Workshop with Grand Erie District School Board.
- City of Brantford Notice of Motion to support the release of records related to Mohawk Institute to the Survivors' Secretariat.



JUNE

- City of Brantford unveiled their Every Child Matters and Survivors' Secretariat wrapped bus to coincide with Indigenous History Month.
- Kim Murray, former Executive Lead of Survivors' Secretariat appointed Special Interlocutor for Unmarked Burials and Missing Children.
- Students begin ground search at the Mohawk Institute.



JULY

- GPR data collection continues at Mohawk Institute.
- Youth Ground Search Team undergoes site training and orientation sessions with Cultural Monitors, Human Rights Monitor, and Ground Search Coordinators.
- Survivor dialogue sessions with Youth
- Staff trained on CPR & First Aid.



AUGUST

- Survivors' Secretariat officially opens our office to the public at 2676 Fourth Line, Ohsweken, ON.
- Secretariat welcomes new Secretariat Lead, Laura Arndt.
- The Secretariat hosts a Year in Review Open House.

SEPTEMBER

- Co-hosted the first Annual Survivors Gathering at Woodland Cultural Centre.
- Reclaiming our Role: Youth Supporting Survivors program concludes for the year.
- Hosted a dinner with the Akwesasne Survivor Community to share knowledge about our work and lessons learned as they begin the work of creating their own Secretariat body.





OCTOBER

- Ground Search concludes for the season and search efforts shift to review of the ground search data.
- Outreach team hosted a community giveaway to encourage family time.
- The Secretariat begins planning commemoration ceremonies.



NOVEMBER

- Attended Office of the Special Interlocutor (OSI) Gathering in Manitoba.
- Hosted a workshop to make poppies and a wreath that were laid at Veterans Park.
- The Secretariat hosted a meeting with those involved in Ground Search including Survivors, developers, City of Brantford staff, Archeologists from Western University, as well as representatives from Mohawk Chapel, Woodland Cultural Centre, and the Multijurisdictional Police Task Force.

DECEMBER

- Ground Search Team travelled to Thunder Bay to strategize with Archaeologist Scott Hamilton about ground search activities and continued developing data analysis protocols.
- The Secretariat came together to support the local food bank by donating food for families.
- Participated in the Six Nations Holiday Parade to promote the work of the Secretariat.



JANUARY

- Attended Office of the Special Interlocutor (OSI) National Gathering on Unmarked Burials: Affirming Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Community Control over Knowledge and Information.



FEBRUARY

- Annual General Meeting held for 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- Multijurisdictional Police Taskforce investigation wraps up.
- Coroners Investigation initiated.
- Attended Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Gathering in Thunder Bay which explored technologies and techniques for conducting ground searches.

MARCH

- Attended Office of the Special Interlocutor (OSI) Gathering on Unmarked Burials: Upholding Indigenous Laws.
- Survivors attended an art installation by Gary Miller at Toronto City Hall which depicts his lived experience while attending the Mohawk Institute.
- Hosted a group from Garden River Reserve who were visiting to learn about ground search tactics for their community.



DOCUMENT COLLECTION

"A key part of our work is to learn as much as we can about every child who attended the Mohawk Institute and create a home for those memories. The Secretariat envisions a place wrapped in culture and love, a process that will ensure the truth remains in the hands of Survivors, and a resource that will be accessible to families." - Laura Arndt, Secretariat Lead



Know History - Document Collection & Review

One of the main objectives of the Secretariat is to access and obtain all information, documentation, and records related to children who were taken to the Mohawk Institute. Survivors' Secretariat employs the help of Historical Research Services, Know History who has obtained over 20,000 relevant documents from over 30 institutions.

Our search has taken us in many directions, we have accessed church, government, law enforcement, health, municipal and historic documents associated with the operation of the Mohawk Institute. We have reviewed attendance records, correspondence, personal journals, photographs, maps, transcripts of interviews and Survivor statements along with print media and newspaper articles.



Animikii - Survivor Database

In the last year we have completed a series of online sessions and in-person conversations with Survivors and partners. The Secretariat worked to secure the Niwin software licenses needed to build the community database. As we continue our work with Animikii we will store all records and documents held by the Secretariat in this database while ensuring access remains in the hands of Survivors and their families. Documentation stored will include but is not limited to PDFs, GPS, GPR, LiDAR, satellite, photography and local imagery, etc.



**SURVIVORS'
SECRETARIAT**



GROUND SEARCH



Searching the Grounds at Mohawk Institute

The work of searching the grounds of the Mohawk Institute ran from May to October with the help of staff, community volunteers and summer students. Grids were laid with the help of the Multijurisdictional Police Task Force. GPR data was collected at the Mohawk Institute and was uploaded to a server for future analysis.

Plans have been made for improvements to next year's search, including relocating to the Mohawk Chapel as Survivors want to conduct GPR on known burial sites to help identify GPR reflections in our local elements/soil conditions. The Secretariat will also look at additional technologies in the coming year including, but not limited to LiDAR, thermal imagery, photogrammetry, and cadaver dogs.



Developing a Path Forward

When conducting the data analysis, it is important to know the history of the land in order to rule out known anomalies and “problematic” areas to be aware of. Once we have all the historical data archived and organized, we can prepare to move on to the analysis portion. Having organized historical data is crucial for conducting the analysis as we are able to address anomalies more accurately. This is a complex process requiring a great deal of data from a variety of sources. GPR data will need to be sifted to filter out reflections that are tied to pipes, electrical lines, trees, roots, old building foundations, etc.

The Secretariat has been in communication with a number of archeological expert as we work to access the technical knowledge and expertise needed to conduct, process and analyze our ground search data.



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COMMEMORATION



Cultural Monitors

The mandate for our Cultural Monitors was in part tied to our work with the Multijurisdictional Police Task Force. Cultural Monitors were available to provide guidance and assistance to the criminal investigatory team. The cultural monitor role is in place to ensure the children are honoured and respected through the conducting of ceremonies that reflect Haudenosaunee, Ojibwe, and Cree cultures. These are the communities and nations of the children who were taken and placed at the Mohawk Institute.

In the final days of our funding year, we have taken steps to embed cultural monitoring within a broader framework of wellness and healing that ensures Survivors and staff have access to ceremony and cultural supports.



Documenting Survivor's Lived Experiences

Survivors participated in the filming of several documentaries including *Survivors Share Their Truths*, a short film highlighting the importance of the apple orchard to Survivors of the Mohawk Institute. Scan the QR to view.

To further commemorate the lived experiences of Survivors and the history of the Mohawk Institute we have been working with Know History to develop a documentary, podcast, mobile exhibit, and a series of academic papers that focus on key issues raised by Survivors.

SCAN ME





Supporting the Work into Unmarked Burials

The Secretariat worked with the City of Brantford's Legislated Services and Planning Department to identify a buffer zone around the search area and a flagging process for development taking place within the buffer zone.

In May 2022, Brantford City Council unanimously supported Councillor Wall's Notice of Motion that calls on the federal and provincial governments, as well as the Anglican Church, to release all documents in the possession of the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Anglican Church related to the former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School to Survivors' Secretariat immediately. Since this call, three municipalities have supported the Notice of Motion including Wainfleet, Shuniah, and Hearst municipalities.



Working in Partnership

Partnering with Woodland Cultural Centre and Mohawk Village Memorial Park, Survivors' Secretariat assisted with the first post-COVID gathering of living Survivors of the Mohawk Institute. The Secretariat covered the costs of travel and accommodation for Survivors and a support person to join the 2-day gathering. During the gathering, we provided Survivors a tour of our office and hosted nightly meet and greet activities.

The Secretariat attended several Gatherings hosted by the Office of the Special Interlocutor throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year. As well as attending a Gathering hosted by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, exploring technologies and techniques for conducting ground searches. These events serve as an opportunity to connect with other communities and share strategies.



Survivors gathered during the OSI Gathering in January 2023 in British Columbia



IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

The Survivors' Secretariat acknowledges that as the original peoples of this land we have an inherent and rights-based interest in the burials, artifacts and pre-history of our ancestors and their traditional territories. The Mohawk Institute received children from at least 56 communities and 2 geographic regions (James Bay and Hudson Bay). We remain committed to honouring the children, their families and communities including their cultures, ceremonies, and languages in our work.



- Cultural monitoring is extremely important for the ongoing investigation in the search for unmarked burials as it provides the respect, care, and reverence that this sensitive work deserves.
- Cultural monitoring acts as a deterrent to those who may be considering the desecration of such places that we consider sacred.
- Early identification of issues allows for swift action to reduce potential damage and prevent further harm to these sacred sites.
- Cultural monitoring ensures that all activities related to burial sites conform to both legal and ethical standards and uphold the rights and values of Indigenous cultures.
- By preserving the burial sites, cultural monitoring helps safeguard this heritage for future generations.



RECLAIMING OUR ROLE



Reclaiming Our Role

The Reclaiming Our Role – Youth Supporting Survivors program has created a community-focused environment for young people to reclaim their sacred role as helpers. A group of Intergenerational Survivors – youth aged 18-29 – stepped forward to partner with Survivors in the search for unmarked burials and missing children. Youth were trained on how to use Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology to collect data on the former grounds of the Mohawk Institute.

Nya:weh | Thank You | Miigwech

We extend our gratitude to: Angelina Bomberry, Dakota Sabourin, Riley Hill, Eric Patterson, Treyton Squire, Keyara Jacobs and Jesse Squire for their assistance in the 2022 ground search at the Mohawk Institute.

Additional Learning

Students not only learned how to conduct GPR data collection, they also gained a sense of confidence as they shared their perspective, insights and learning through media relations, content writing, and public speaking.

Program Made Possible

In 2022/2023 the Survivors' Secretariat applied for “Continuing their Journey” funding through the National Indian Brotherhood Trust.



NIB Trust Fund
Continuing Our Journey

Continuing Their Journey

The “Continuing Their Journey” (CTJ) Program supports First Nation communities and Survivors with projects directly related to burial sites and unmarked graves at former Indian Residential Schools. CTJ is specifically intended to address the traumas of the Indian Residential Schools System experienced by Survivors and their descendants residing in First Nation communities.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION SWITCHES TO A CORONER'S INVESTIGATION



Criminal Investigation

The Multijurisdictional Police Taskforce (MJPTF) completed its file review into the 48 known deaths, which were originally reported by the National Centre of Truth and Reconciliation, in February 2023. The MJPTF informed the Secretariat that there are no living individuals that could be charged. Thus, it was determined that a coroner's investigation would be more appropriate. A report summarizing their investigation for the Board of Directors was requested and anticipated for September 2023.



Coroner's Investigation

The Office of the Chief Coroner will investigate the deaths of the children that died at the Mohawk Institute, seeking to determine who died, when they died, where they died, and how they died.

The Coroner's Office will work within the Coroner's Act utilizing the powers within to assist and support the work of the Survivors' Secretariat. We are actively working with the Coroner to determine the path forward.



Investigation into Unmarked Burials Relationship Building Workshop, Woodland Cultural Centre, November 2022

STANDING WITH SURVIVORS

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On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff of the Survivors' Secretariat and Survivors we want to extend our gratitude and collective good medicine to the many people and organizations who have made financial and/or in-kind contributions in 2022/2023. We are honoured that you have joined us in the work, and we hope you will continue to be part of our efforts to *Bring the Children Home*.

Standing with Survivors 2022-2023

- Avon Maitland District School Board
- COBS Bread, Brantford, ON
- First Line Ice Cream
- Laura Secord Secondary School
- Nighthawk Security
- Peel Elementary Teachers' Local
- Polestar Hearth Bakery Inc.
- Six Nations Chiefs
- University of Guelph
- National Indian Brotherhood
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Law Foundation of Ontario
- Chief Mark Hill, Tammy Martin & Wayne Staats of Six Nations of the Grand River
- Multijurisdictional Police Task Force
- Canada & Province of Ontario



POLESTAR HEARTH



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada

First Line Ice Cream



UNIVERSITY of GUELPH



NIB Trust Fund
Continuing Our Journey



COBS BREAD



The Law Foundation of Ontario



We are grateful to those who have supported and continue to support Survivors' Secretariat in our efforts to **uncover, document, and share** the truth about what happened at the Mohawk Institute during its 140+ years of operation.

To download our Audited Financial Statements for 2022-2023 please visit our website and don't forget to follow us on social media.



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