



Matawa Health Co-operative
World AIDS Day 2023
December 1, 2023
 Matawa Education Care Center
 Thunder Bay, ON

Agenda
Meeting Room – Matawa Education Care Center Gymnasium

Time	Item	Facilitator
8:30 am	Registration	
9:00 am	Opening Prayer/Land Acknowledgement	Ron Kanutski, Emcee Elder
	Drumming	Matawa Education Care Center
	Opening Remarks from Executive Director and Public Health Nurse Lead	Frances Wesley MHC Executive Director & Leola Bouchard-Penagin Public Health Nurse Lead
9:30am	A Mile in Our Moccasins Video	CATIE video
10:00am	HIV 101	Melissa Deschamps and Sarah Pugh Elevate/OAHAS
10:30 am	BREAK	
10:45 am	Ice Breaker Activity	Cassandra Voets, Child & Youth Mental Health & Wellness Lead
11:00 am	Uniting Conversations	Dr. Makokis and Anthony Johnson
12:00	LUNCH - Provided	
1:00 pm	Matawa Education Care Center Clinical Services for Students	Dr. Rebekah Neckoway & Lady Avellana RPN
1:30 pm	Sexual Health Clinic and Harm Reduction	Emily Laing, RN

		Thunder Bay District Health Unit
1:50	End of Day Reflections and Attendance Draws	Ron Kanutski/Leola Bouchard-Penagin

Presenters Bio

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Ron Kanutski, RSW,

Comedian, Musician, MC, College Instructor & Healing & Wellness Facilitator



Boozhoo/Waachiiye

My name is Ron Kanutski Ojibway and Cree roots and is from the Bear Clan. I am a band member of the Red Rock Indian Band (Lake Helen 1st Nation) with my grandmother's roots from the Moose Cree Nation. As a family man, married for 25 years and with my wife's support and dedication have assisted in raising 25 children in addition to my own. I have been drug and alcohol free for 32 years which I feel has grounded me to be a better version of myself.

Confederation College Graduate: Native Child & Family Worker 1991

President's Medal Recipient

I am an energetic social worker, cultural teacher, group facilitator, college instructor, comedian, promoter, and musician who is a long-term resident of the Ogden East End community in Thunder Bay ON. As the sole proprietor of With Care Consulting and Ron Kanutski Comedy I work diligently throughout Canada and the USA to wherever I am called which is currently with NAN HOPE. I believe in the power of spirit and the importance of connection.

Key Note Speakers

AMAZING TWO-SPIRIT COUPLE

Anthony Johnson & Dr. James Makokis

Anthony Johnson and Dr. James Makokis shattered conventional norms as the first-ever Two-Spirit team on the Amazing Race Canada. Their inspiring journey brought critical issues of gender, sexuality, and First Nations experiences to the national spotlight. Demonstrating tenacity, resilience, and indomitable spirit, they triumphed in Season 7, setting a groundbreaking precedent for diverse representation in popular media.

While they may seem inseparable, each brings a unique perspective, a distinct skill set, and a wealth of lived experiences that have shaped them into the advocates they are today. Their intertwined journeys as individuals, as a Two-Spirit couple, and as part of the rich tapestry of their peoples' history, have fueled their work in service and in advocacy. Their focus lies in raising awareness about the challenges faced by First Nation and LGBTQ2S+ communities, and the need for equity and accessibility.

As they traverse Canada, sharing tales of their Amazing Race journey, their community endeavors, and their unique perspectives, they provide insightful recommendations on how to further their cause and challenge oppressive stereotypes. Their mission is to globally unite allies in the pursuit of equal access and fair treatment for the communities they represent.



A MILE IN OUR MOCCASINS VIDEO (21mins)

HIV education and awareness through lived experiences and an Indigenous lens (21mins) (Catie site)

Melissa Deschamps, Ontario Aboriginal HIV AIDS Strategy

Melissa Deschamps is an Indigenous woman who was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She is a Red Rock Indian Band member and her family's clan is the wolf. She is also a mother to 2 beautiful boys.

Melissa has lived experience with mental illness and addictions and has been on her healing journey for about 12 years now. She didn't grow up with the Indigenous culture or traditions but has been learning and embracing the teachings she has received over the last few years. Melissa has been working for Ontario Aboriginal HIV AIDS Strategy since March 2018. She supports Indigenous people living with HIV, HCV and who are at risk.



Cassandra Voets – Child & Youth Mental Health & Wellness Lead with Matawa Health Cooperative

Cassandra is from a small town in Southern Ontario called Blenheim (45 minutes from Canada's southern most point). She moved to Thunder Bay in 2019 after completing her undergrad at

Laurier Brantford in Youth & Children Studies and Human Rights. She also received her Honours Bachelor of Social Work at Lakehead University & completed a placement in art therapy. She has been with Matawa Health Cooperative for almost 2 years now working with Matawa youth. She works in a joint effort with community partners, MHC staff and Matawa youth to implement strong wholistic service-delivery that leaves youth more engaged and with an improved overall wellbeing. Cassandra has worked with youth in various capacities throughout her career and values the shared learning experiences that come with it. When not working you can find her cuddled up on the couch with her pets, dancing, practicing yoga or out in nature taking a hike & soaking up some sunshine.



Emily Laing, RN

Thunder Bay District Health Unit



Emily has been a registered nurse for 5 and a half years, with a dedication to working within the community and public health setting. She has a nursing background in harm reduction, hepatitis C, and HIV, where she spent the first 4 years of her career providing such nursing care for the underserved populations in our community. She later transitioned to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit healthy schools program working within the schools in Thunder Bay and District, facilitating health education to students ranging from kindergarten to grade 12. She is now a public health nurse on the sexual health team at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit