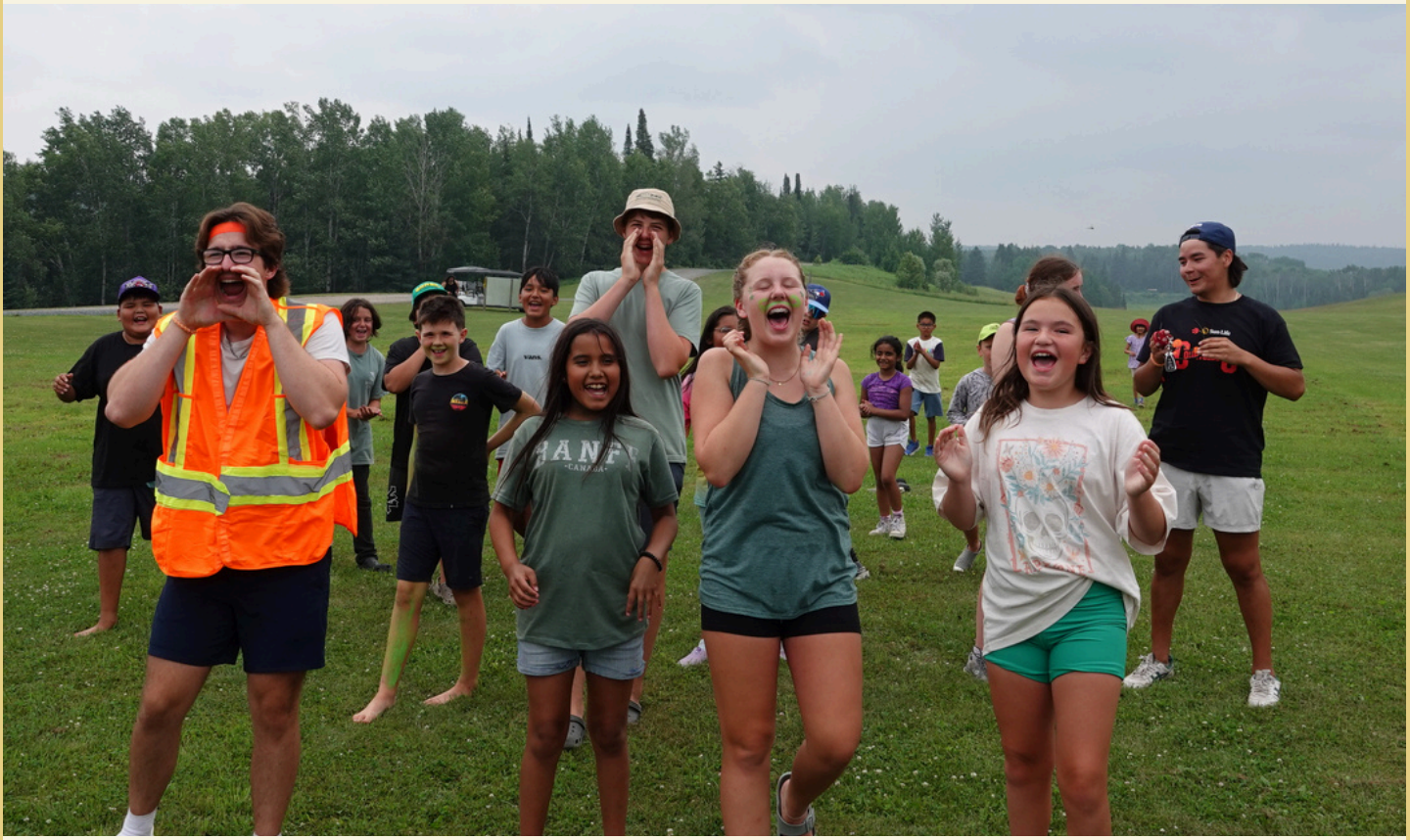
SUMMER CAMP 2026

Impact Assessment

What campers and families shared about confidence, belonging, culture, and the land—and the experiences that mattered most.



Makate Waagamichiwanang Gakinaa'amaatiwin

Youth and Family Wellness Camp

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FOR THE LAND * FOR THE PEOPLE * FOR THE FUTURE

Summer Camp 2026

Summer Camp gave children a place to feel welcome, build friendships, connect with culture and the land, and discover what they are capable of. In 2026, camper and family feedback showed that these experiences mattered.

Across 4 weeks of day camp in July and 2 weeks of overnight camp in August, we welcomed children from our 8 founding First Nations and the broader Kenora area.

451	79%
Total Campers	Identify as Indigenous





Time on the land & with each other

Campers explored through swimming, canoeing, paddleboarding, sports, gardening, berry picking, and outdoor games. Cultural activities, traditional medicines, crafts, and teachings with Knowledge Keepers offered opportunities to learn about culture, community, and caring for the land.

Equine programming gave children opportunities to spend time with farm animals, participate in horseback riding, and build comfort with unfamiliar experiences. Creative projects provided space for self-expression, while team activities encouraged children to cooperate, encourage one another, and work toward shared goals.



Leadership opportunities and daily camp routines helped children practice responsibility and independence. For overnight campers, staying away from home brought new challenges, shared routines, and more time to develop relationships with other campers and staff.

Different ways to participate & connect

The variety of experiences allowed children to find activities they enjoyed while trying something new. Some were drawn to the waterfront or sports fields; others connected through art, cultural learning, gardening, or time at the farm.

Favourite memories reflected this range: swimming and paddleboarding, horses and farm animals, berry picking, food, games, and time with friends and counsellors. Often, an activity and the people sharing it were part of the same memory.

"My friends and counsellors were the best" - Day Camper



Through everyday moments of play, learning, and encouragement, camp gave children opportunities to discover their strengths and find their place.

Our goal was for every child to feel known, supported, and confident enough to try.







What Campers & Families Told Us

Feedback from 321 camper surveys and 49 parent and guardian surveys provides a picture of the summer's impact. Among campers who answered each question:

Belonging and relationships mattered

91% felt safe, welcome, and like they belonged

91% wanted to return to camp

83% said they tried new things & felt more confident

Parents reinforced these findings. **94% rated safety highly, 94% rated welcome and inclusion highly, and 90% rated relationships with campers and staff highly.**

Connections also extended beyond children's usual peer groups, with **81% reporting friendships with youth from other communities.**

> *Camp provided "allyship and connection with their peers in a culturally safe environment." - Camp Parent*

The impact reached families as well: **88% said Summer Camp strengthened their family's connection to the Youth & Family Wellness Camp.**

Culture and learning came home

Families heard stories about braiding sweetgrass, picking vegetables from the garden, finding blueberries, and caring for the land. **75% of parents reported that their child shared learning from a Knowledge Keeper**, and the same percentage said their child talked about caring for the land. These accounts show how experiences at camp became conversations and learning shared at home.

Children came home glowing

Parents described greater independence, comfort meeting new people, and enthusiasm for unfamiliar activities. Some noticed improved self-esteem, new interests in sports and horseback riding, and children becoming more able to share their feelings.

One parent described their child as "glowing" after camp. Another shared how camp helped their child discover that they were capable of more than they thought:

> *"He has experienced unfamiliar faces, places, and challenges and has learned that he is capable of overcoming his doubts and fears to experience what life has to offer and not be held back. He has learned that people love him and accept him for who he is." - Camp Parent*

For families, the impact was visible in the stories children told, the challenges they felt ready to take on, and the pride they brought home. Their feedback suggests that the **confidence and connections built at camp continued to matter beyond the last day.**

The Impact in Numbers

From the Campers

321 Campers completed our survey at the end of their Camp experience.

96%	I learned to be kind and respect the environment	**91%**	I want to come back to Camp again
91%	Camp made me feel safe, welcomed: like I belonged	**89%**	Camp helped me be active and take care of my body and mind
84%	I learned about my culture, the land and my community	**83%**	I tried new things & feel more confident because of camp

From the Parents

49 parents completed our survey at the end of their child's Camp experience.

94%	My child felt safe at camp	**94%**	My child felt welcomed and included
90%	My child built positive relationships with campers and staff	**88%**	My child talked positively about meeting new people
88%	Summer Camp strengthened our family's connection to the Camp	**86%**	My child is more confident in social situations
85%	My child showed greater appreciation for being outdoors	**81%**	Camp helped my child build friendships with youth from other communities

Camp Made a Difference

Parents described children returning home with new friendships, new interests, and a greater willingness to try something unfamiliar. As one parent shared, their child's **"spirit has been lifted by good energy and vibes from the good youth camp workers."**

These experiences speak to what camp makes possible: a sense of belonging, pride in identity, and confidence that children carry home. Families' feedback will guide improvements for next summer, helping us build on what worked and respond where more support is needed.

Miigwetch to the staff, Knowledge Keepers, families, partners, and supporters who made this possible. Together, we are helping children grow strong in who they are and confident in what they can become.