RED LAKE REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTRE

Showcasing achievements and progress of the RLRHC throughout the year.

RED LAKE REGIONAL HERITAGE CENTRE

2025

RED LAKE
Opportunity...it's our Nature

OUR PURPOSE

MANDATE

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre is responsible for preserving, promoting and interpreting Red Lake's natural and social history.

MISSION

Working in partnership with the community, the Municipality, and key stakeholders, the RLRHC strives to be a leader in preserving, promoting, and celebrating the region's natural and cultural heritage. This mission is fulfilled through:

- Ensuring that the community of Red Lake's ongoing history is documented and represented through exhibitions, research, art, and events.
- Creating an environment of exploration, where education and growth bring together communities and provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Together with community representatives provide opportunities to strengthen Red Lake's positive identity through exhibits, events, programming, and performances.

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REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

2025 was a huge year for the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre (RLRHC). It represented the culmination of three multi year long projects. The first of these three projects was the completion of the Main Gallery, including the Anishnaabe: The People of the Land. The Anishnaabe exhibit was created with the purpose of having visitors feel like they were viewing two separate exhibits about the same topic. We wanted them to look at the exterior, its material culture and its well laid out signage and almost clinical feel, and think of a modern museum. We also wanted visitors to explore the interior of the exhibit and feel alive and inspired. In order to accomplish those goals, it was nessiary to ensure that the exhibit had a visual aspect that could convey these feelings. Woodland Art was chosen because of its importance to the indigenous people in the area, and its importance in Red Lake specifically. Early on in 2025, five Woodland Artists worked on a series of four murals. The Murals were digitized and printed on vinyl. They were mounted on the interior of the exhibit.

2025 also marked the culmination of planning and unvieling the 100 years of Red Lake year long event. For the RLRHC that meant a summer exhibit, a wine and cheese opening event, a banner project where artists reimagined photographs from era's past, and helping with many other elements of the 100 Years events.

Finally, 2025 was the completion of the negotiations with the Municipality of Red Lake. The RLRHC has been looking to stabilize its fincial portfollio. It was reconized the Board of Directors that the only way to find more stable funding was to join the parent organization. In 2026, the RLRHC will intergrate into the Municipality. This will mean a lot of changes, but we are excited what these types of changes could mean, and look forward to becoming part of the Municipality of Red Lake.

Trevor Osmond
Director

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, the Municipality of Red Lake acknowledge that our foundation and the spaces in which we live and maintain are on the lands of the Anishinaapek of Red Lake; the traditional lands of Lac Seul and Wabauskang First Nations, and Treaty 3 territory. As we are all Treaty people, we will continue to cherish the reciprocity of all the relationships on these sacred Lands and Waters.

Mandate, Vision, Guiding Principles, Misson

Mandate

The RLRHC is responsible for preserving, promoting, and interpreting Red Lake's natural and social history.

Vision

The RLRHC strives to promote the ongoing resilience and sustainability of the community through:

- Providing leadership and support to the development of community partnerships
- Celebrate the historical, cultural, and artistic assets of the Red Lake area.

Guiding Principles

The work of RLRHC is guided by the following core values:

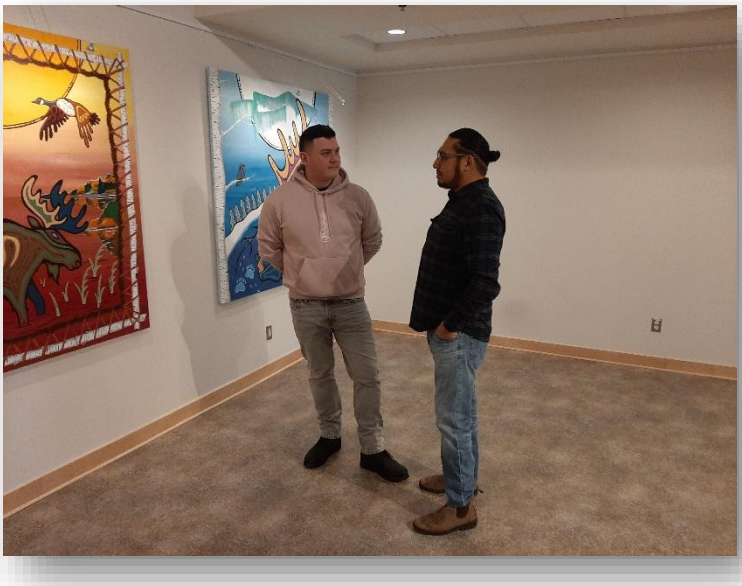
- *Inclusion*: People from a variety of cultural and interest groups and holding a range of perspectives are welcomed, their voices heard, and their stories represented in our work.

- *Participation:* We are active participants in the design and delivery of cultural tourism initiatives and educational projects in the Red Lake area.
- *Welcoming Destination*: The RLRHC offers a safe, welcoming, and comfortable gathering place for residents and visitors.
- *Respectful:* Thoughtful consideration and respect for the people, visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners with whom we engage is always a priority.

Mission

In partnership with the Municipality of Red Lake, the community of Red Lake and key stakeholders, the RLRHC strives to be a leader in preserving, promoting, and celebrating the region's natural and cultural heritage. This mission is fulfilled through:

- Ensuring that the community of Red Lake's ongoing history is documented and represented through exhibitions, research, art, and events.
- Creating an environment of exploration, where education and growth bring together communities and



provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences.

- Together with community representatives, provide opportunities to strengthen Red Lake's positive identity through exhibits, events, programming, and performances.

STRATEGIC GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Staff of the RLRHC continue to strive towards accomplishing the RLRHC's strategic goals (2024-2029). The plan includes six strategic directions that will act as a guide for the next five years.

1) Grow as an Active Tourism Destination
2) Develop communication and promotion
3) Strengthen Team Unity
4) Foster a comfortable and inviting space
5) Forge sustainability
6) Meet museum standards and practices

New Exhibitions

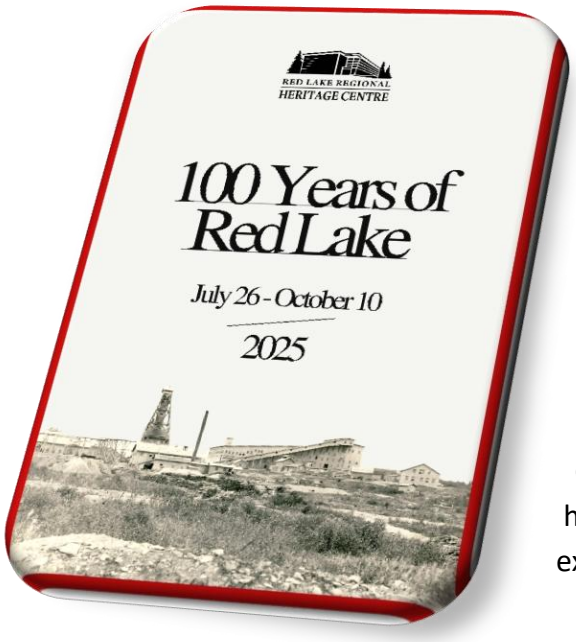
This year the RLRHC staff put together an amazing array of exhibits. The hope was to keep the temporary Gallery full throughout most of the year, and the plan worked very well. The RLRHC held four exhibitions in total. During the year the RLRHC Curator had the pleasure of working with many local artists who put together some extraordinary pieces of work. It was also the culmination of years of planning with regards to the summer exhibition which was enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Tiana Tarantino: An Art Exhibition
May 10 – June 28, 2025

Featuring the exquisite work of local Red Lake resident, and art student, Tiana Tarantino, this art exhibit showcased more than 20 works of art throughout Tiana's years of painting. Although still young, Tiana's ability to deconstruct objects and create visuals are more in line with that of a seasoned professional.

Metis Beading
May 20 – June 30, 2025

Red Lake Madsen Public School students delved into the rich tradition of Metis beading, and explored the culture through their history, identity and artistic expression. The students showcased their artistic talents in a display case in the main hall, where all Red Lake could see their hard work.



100 Years of Red Lake
July 26 – October 10, 2025

The RLRHC attempted to deliver an exhibit covered 100 years of Red Lake's history. From the discovery of gold by the Howey Brothers in Burnt Bay, all the way to the present day. While this monumental task was not without its difficulties, and controversy, the exhibit itself was a resounding success. It was made even more special when the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre was created its own panels to tell a very raw history that many of Red Lake's indigenous community experienced.

Red Lake Annual Art Show
November 15, 2025 – February 21, 2026

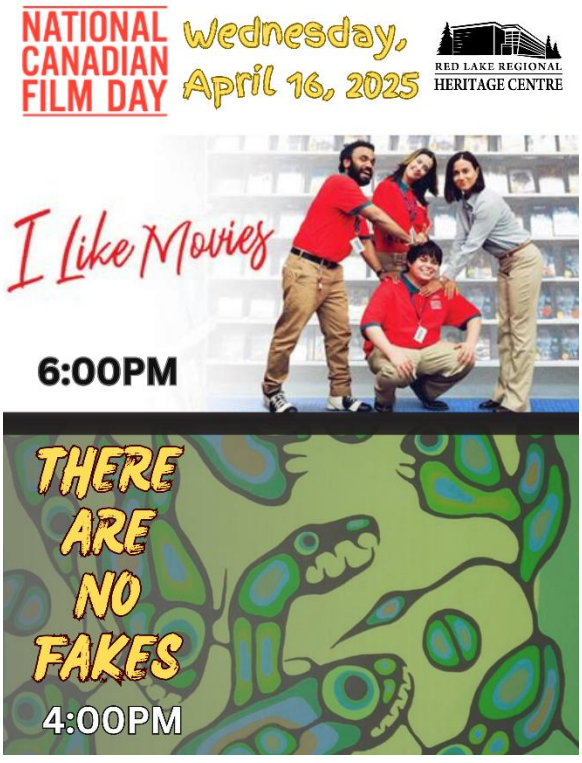
The RLRHC's longest running exhibit series returned with an all-new lineup of artists. While art styles and artists themselves vary from year to year, this year felt special. Over 20 talented people showed off their expertise in one of the best art shows in recent memory.

Public Programs and Events

The RLRHC switched from regional museum to public event centre numerous times over the year. Some of the year's best moments were the result of public programs and events.

New to Town was a returning event that was held twelve years ago to a great deal of fanfare. Its return was similarly regarded as a wonderful evening of friendly banter, games and entertainment. The event drew over 40 people and was successful at attracting several new community members.

Winter Carnival has been running since 2014 with great success. Apart from a few years where Covid-19 prevented social gatherings, the RLRHC has always held its Hot Chocolate Challenge. While always a favourite, this event was made even more special because of the unveiling of the Woodland Art Murals. Over 200 individuals made their way in to see these wonderful pieces of art and to try their best to choose a favourite hot chocolate flavour.



National Canadian Film Day was held on April 16th. The RLRHC celebrated the day by showing two Canadian Films. The first of these films was 'There Are No Fakes', a

documentary about the forgery ring surrounding the art of Norval Morisseau. The second film was a coming-of-age comedy called 'I Like Movies'.

The **Red Lake Living History Event** was the brainchild of the RLRHC Staff and the Age Friendly Coordinator. It was an event which focused on letting Red Lake seniors have a chance to tell their stories. Long time residents shared their amazing life stories, funny anecdotes and interests with a very interested audience. The stories were recorded as part of the RLRHC's initiative to collect Red Lake's oral history.

The **Norseman Festival** provided many drop-in miniature aviators as kids came in on to make aviation themed crafts. Over 20 children dropped in and made aviators goggles, and paper airplanes.

The 100 Years of Red Lake culminated in a day long celebration that marked the exact day that the Howey Brothers discovered gold (July 25). During the day, the RLRHC held a private **Wine and Cheese** function for dignitaries and politicians. As part of the event, the brand new 100 Years of Red Lake exhibit was opened for visitors to enjoy.

Pride Weekend was celebrated at four different venues in 2025. The Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre and New Starts for Women planned a series of events to encourage youth from all over to attend. The RLRHC was chosen as the site of the opening talk given by Ma-Nee Chacaby on August 22.

As part of **National Reconciliation Day**, the RLRHC joined forces with the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre to present a talk about one man's journey from Pelican Lake Residential School to celebrated leader of his community.

On September 25, the Municipality of Red Lake held a **Public Open House Transit Study** in three different locations simultaneously. The meeting held in Red

Lake took place at the RLRHC. The goal was to invite the public to speak about what they required out of a potential public transportation system.

On the 30th of October, the RLRHC held its annual **Halloween Fright Night** to major success. Attracting over 150 ghouls and goblins, visitors were lined up out the door waiting for the chance to be scared in the Fright Room. Along with games and crafts, the evening featured plenty of candy to send kids home happy.

The **Pub Quiz** trivia night has been extremely popular over the years. This year's trivia night attracted eight great teams. Categories ranged from local history to spices, and famous clowns to universities. There was something for everyone. In addition, teams enjoyed great food wine and beer.

Research and Collections Highlights

2025 Collections Update:

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre Collections has had a busy year with acquisitions with 24 donations in total. Here are some of the highlights of what has been donated:

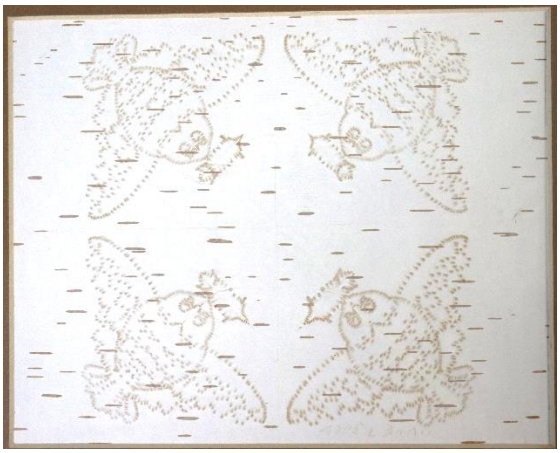
- A Red Lake pennant (flag) purchased at Cassidy's Jewelers in the 1950s
- A museum transfer from Haileybury Heritage Museum of photographs of the Red Lake Hotel fire in 1945
- Two Mining Certificates from Buffalo Red Lake Gold Mines from the 1940s and 1950s
- Four colour slides of downtown Red Lake from 1949
- The original test Print Canvas of the 'Legend of Red Lake' by Dave Erb
- Eight large scale Maps of the Red Lake area detailing roads, landmarks and geography
- Two Birch Bark Bitings by Angelique Merasty in memory of Tim Alderton
- A pewter Norseman Business Card Holder from the offices of the Noorduyn Aviation factory in Montreal
- Receipt Book from J. Sam Yee's Pipestone Store, c. 1940s
- Map of the Red Lake township c. 1949
- Pair of skates used on the Howey Mine hockey team

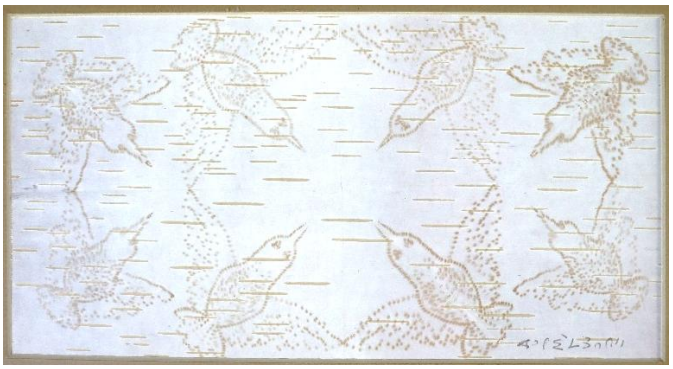
This past year, time has been spent on cataloguing new accessions as they arrived, as well as organizing the storage rooms to accommodate them. Volunteer Justine, worked on updating a box of sports badges throughout the year. Justine was able to photograph the badges with

updated photographs and then organize those badges in our digital files. Justine sewed numbered tags on the badges, as well as repacked them in fresh tissue. The box now has an updated inventory sheet and is ready to be placed back into storage.

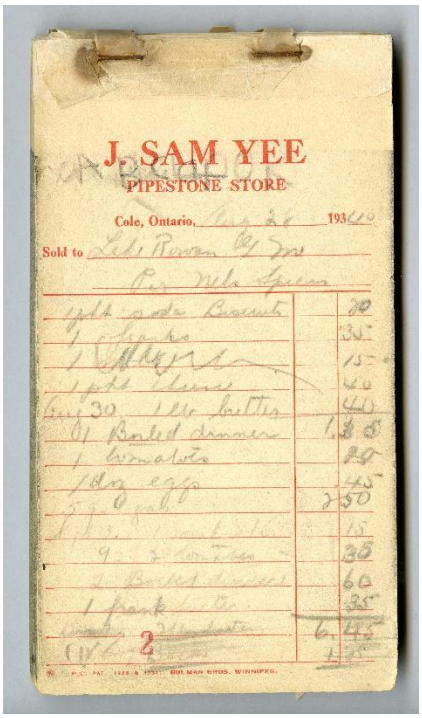
The Heritage Centre also had two **high school Co-op students** during 2025. One from February to June and another from September to January of this year. Both students worked alongside the Curator in the collections. They learned how to properly photograph artefacts and organize those photographs into the digital files. They also learned how to catalogue artefacts into our collection's software, as well as upload the photographs they took in addition to editing them. Both students were tasked with continuing to digitize our newspaper collection. They learned what standards are used to scan for the collection and archive, as well as how to edit the scans to make them searchable. The second student was also able to help scan and catalogue several photographs from the archive. All their hard work was helpful and very appreciated as it has continued the large task of cataloguing and caring for the Heritage Centre's collection.

Colour slides depicting downtown Red Lake c. 1949.





2 Birch Bark Bitings by Angelique Merasty in memory of Tim Alderton



Receipt Book from J. Sam Yee's Pipestone Store, c. 1940s; section of 1949 Red Lake Township map

Pair of hockey skates used by William Cook on the Howey Mine hockey team

HERITAGE CENTRE VISITORS

5,900 IN PERSON VISITORS

23 NEW MEMBERS

17 EVENTS

28 CLASS VISITS

TRIP ADVISOR: 4.5/5 STARS

RATED 70% ON FACEBOOK REVIEWS

2.8K FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

TOTAL WEBSITE VIEWS: 37,826

THREE EXHIBIT Openings

"AMAZING!"
- ISABELLE FROM MINNESOTA

"VERY COOL"
- RUBY FROM IOWA

Age Friendly

"BEAUTIFUL DISPLAYS"
- THE GRETSINGERS FAMILY, FROM PORTAGE PRARIE, MANITOBA

GIFT SHOP

The During the 2025, there was a significant increase in giftshop revenue when compared to the previous year. It was marked by a 52% increase overall. The increase is likely due to the various events surrounding the 100 Years of Red Lake celebration. There was significant interest in several items including t-shirts, stickers, magnets and Hoodies. In addition, the RLRHC also brought in popular items including a model of the DRD Norseman aircraft, many items with artwork by Storm Angeconeb, 3D Toys, and T-shirts representing the communities located in the area (Balmertown, Cochenour).

Year	Total Revenue
2025	$44,061.98
2024	$28,980.38
2023	$26,903.46
2022	$30,128.82
2021	$15,364.99

Table 6: Total gift shop revenue by year

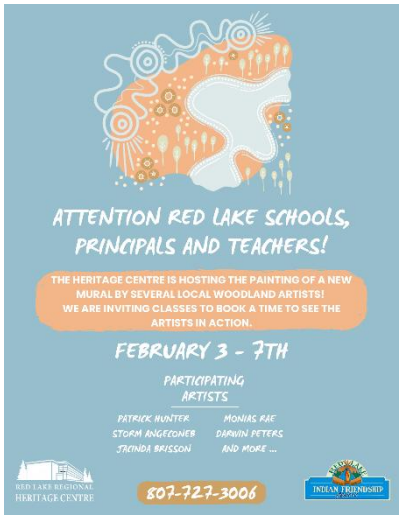
MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre has sought out new approaches to further develop its marketing and communications plan. Due the lack of traditional media, Red Lake staff used its social media presence to engage the public. An active set of weekly posts starting in late 2024, and picking up in 2025, allowed staff to provide details on Red Lake's History, its upcoming events and its gift shop items. This strategy has been helpful for overall engagement.

Year	On-site Visitors	Website Visits	Facebook Views
2021	776	19,412	64,505
2022	3,203	20,278	168,217
2023	4,185	22,776	156,947
2024	5,543	32,003	255,244
2025	5,900	37,826	1,650,515

Historically the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre has used posters on its website and Facebook as its main method of advertising. To branch out, Instagram was added to seek a different demographic. Advertising through posters and is one of the better ways to reach people, however, physically distributing the posters seems to help with word of mouth. Despite all the technology associated with advertising, it seems that in Red Lake, word of mouth is still king. The RLRHC still advertises with Highway 105 Tourism, Northern Ontario Travel, and through the Municipal Newsletter.

The number of onsite visitors increased by 6.7% from last year's total. The total number of Website visitors increased by nearly 15%. The number of views on Facebook increased by 154%. This large increase was largely due to the 100 Years of Red Lake Celebration, the increased number of posts, and the better streamlined content.



MEMBERSHIPS

The RLRHC membership program offers a strong incentive to those who want to visit the museum, purchase items at the gift shop or partake in the programming opportunities.

Memberships fit into the following categories:

Annual Membership
Individual $25
Senior/Student $20
Family (parents and children under 16) $40
Senior Couple (one member over 65) $30

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *50% off educational programs*

Non-Profit Organization Membership
Annual Organizational Membership $50

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items (Organization purchases only)*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *10% off all facility rentals*
- *50% off educational programs*

School Membership
Annual School Membership - Cost dependent on the number of students attending the school

Free admission to all exhibits.

- *100% off all standard school programs*
- *10% off all facility rentals*

Corporate Membership
Annual Organizational Membership $150

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items (Corporate purchases only)*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *10% off all facility rentals*

Lifetime Membership
Individual $150
Family (two adults & children under 17) $300

Free admission for life (no expiry)

- *Free access to our digital and physical archives*
- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *Member's name acknowledged in the lobby of the Heritage Centre*
- *50% off educational programs*

Membership Type	2022 Purchases	2023 Purchases	2024 Purchases	2025 Purchases
Lifetime Membership - Family	1	1	2	1
Lifetime Membership - Individual	1	3	1	1
Annual School Membership	0	1	2	1
Annual Non-Profit Organization Memberships	0	1	1	1
Annual Family Memberships	0	2	2	2
Annual Individual Memberships	1	2	3	3
Annual Senior Couple Membership	2	7	5	8
Annual Senior Individual Memberships	3	2	6	4
Corporate Membership	0	0	1	1
Total	**8**	**19**	**23**	**22**

Table 7: Membership types sold by year.

OUR TEAM

RLRHC STAFF

Trevor Osmond
Museum Director

Stephanie Dermann
Curator

Sarah Dufour
Receptionist

Gaury Nair
NOHFC Public Relations Intern

Joceyln Copeman
Museum Docent

Olivia Harrington
Museum Programmer

RLRHC Board of Directors

Gary Horne
Board Chair

Hilary Reid
Vice Chair

Graeme Swanwick
Secretary

Debra Geary
Council Representative

Josiah Meyers
Trustee

Scott Macumber
Trustee

Jacinda Brisson
Trustee

Supporters

We are grateful to our donors, sponsors and grantors for your generous contributions made throughout 2025. Your donations helped raise over $7,500 in 2025. The RLRHC was able to secure $22,500 in funding through the Provincial government, and $30,000 through federal grants.

Operating Grants

Canadian Museums Operating Grant (CMOG)
Municipality of Red Lake
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
Government of Canada

Project and In-Kind Donors

Balmertown Food Fair
Red Lake IGA
Robert Rosenberger, Ethel & Jim Dodd, Jeannette Kostynuk, Carol & Gary Horne, Carolyn Spicer, Lisa Clouston, Lynne Wills, Diane Cloutier, Paul Strothers, Caroline Upward, Caroline Collins, Carl Bleich, Janet & John Hager, Rhona Karshti, Sonja Lundstrom, My Tribute Gift, Peter Kirby, John & Marilyn Frostiak, Lakeside Marina, Angela & Peter Bishop, Deanna Sullivan, Station 105, Monique Boucha.

Project Partners & Affiliates

Chukuni Communities Development Corporation
Sunset Country Museum Association
Municipality of Red Lake
Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage site
Science North
Highway 105 Tourism and Marketing Board
Norseman Festival Committee
Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
Reel Canada
Adult Learning Centre
Association Francophone de Red Lake
Red Lake Airport
Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital
New Starts for Women
Patrick Hunter, Jacinda Brisson, Darwin Peters, Storm Angeconeb, Monias Rae, Tarantino

22 Volunteers

Organizing Cataloguing Data entry

Exhibit instalation Event Set-up

Halloween Fright Night

Photography Research Collections

Gift Shop Set up/take down

Winter Carnival Decorating

Special Events Exhibits

Volunteers

391.25 Volunteer Hours