



**SPIRIT NORTH**

YOUNG FAST FREE



2018 annual report

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# CEO's MESSAGE FROM BECKIE SCOTT

At Spirit North we believe in dreaming big, and we encourage every young person who enters our programs to do the same. Our work is anchored in empowering youth to get active, discover their potential, and fulfill their promise.

The great news is that we're making incredible progress! Now working across five provinces, our focus has expanded along with a diverse and growing list of participating communities. Our network of teachers, coaches, staff and board members has grown and evolved too, but we all share the same enthusiasm for engaging Indigenous youth in all manner of activity—from cross-country skiing to mountain biking, hiking and running.

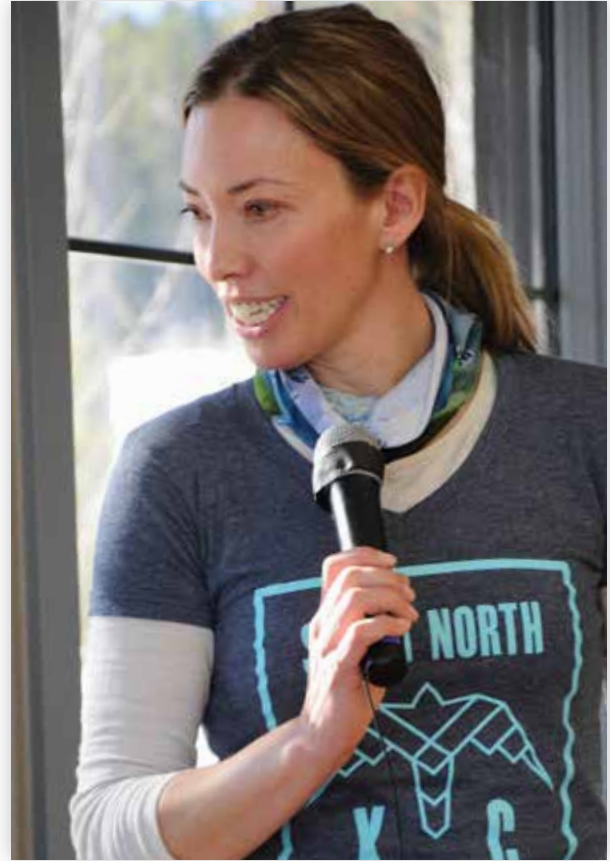
In 2018-19, Spirit North enjoyed another milestone year. We expanded into Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, partnered with 15 new communities, and engaged seven Indigenous coaches—all of whom are making a huge positive difference as community role models. Our co-creation workshops were another major success that we intend to build upon in the years to come. This collaborative approach to program planning, which respects the knowledge, experience and culture of community participants, is at the heart of everything we do.

To our dedicated partners and supporters—none of this would be possible without you. Thank you for all you've done and continue to do, and thank you for dreaming big with us!

Yours sincerely,



Beckie Scott  
CEO, Spirit North



## 2018 Board of Directors

Barbara Conkie – Board Chair

Laurie Thompson

Andy Harris

Rob Buffler

Dr. Sam Wong

Jude Daniels

Dr. Sean Lessard

Larry Greer

## Beckie Scott becomes an Officer of the Order of Canada

Spirit North CEO Beckie Scott said she was humbled and tremendously grateful to be named an Officer of the Order of Canada—one of the country's highest honours. She said it's a testament to the important work of Spirit North, which aims to bring new resources and opportunities for outdoor recreation to Indigenous youth across the country. "Spirit North is about ensuring that every child in this country has a chance to experience the benefits of sport, play and activity, and all the amazing physical and mental health benefits that come with that," said Scott. "This isn't about high-performance sport or elitism, it's about fairness and equality of opportunity and opening doors to a population of children and youth that had not been open before."



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## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to empower and inspire Indigenous youth through sport and play.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is health, wellness and a brighter future for all Indigenous children and youth.



# OUR WORK

Spirit North **now reaches over 6,000** Indigenous youth annually throughout Canada, providing opportunities for sport, play and land-based activities.

# OUR IMPACT

Spirit North empowers youth to learn, grow, thrive and strengthen themselves and their communities through sport. ***Our programs...***

***INCREASE** mental and physical health through activity*

***CREATE** a sense of belonging within the wider community*

***IMPROVE** academic outcomes and attendance*

***BUILD** stronger connections with the land*



# OUR TEAM

***We have over 30 coaches and leaders across Canada working daily to improve lives and communities with the transformative power of sport and play.***

“Spirit North’s strengths lie in its dedicated staff and its unique approach to programming. Facilitator/coaches have repeatedly demonstrated incredible commitment to the communities they serve. They are aware of the positive impact they’re having and they care deeply about the children they work with. They understand the larger intent of sport programming to positively impact community mental health and student self-confidence. They continually look for ways to broaden the scope and influence of their work to benefit their communities.”

- Jonathan Aitken  
and Nicole Markwick,  
Spirit North Project Summary, 2019







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*"Having caring, patient and thoughtful instructors is a key component to a successful program. I like how the Spirit North leaders made all my students feel valued and appreciated." - Teacher*

# CO-CREATION

***One of the most exciting developments over the past year has been our strategy of “co-creation” in building Spirit North programs. This collaborative approach respects the knowledge, experience and culture of community participants, individually and as a whole.***

.....

The process involves gathering input from students, teachers, Elders and other community members to build programs that reflect their unique values and goals, ensuring sustainable programs that will continue to make a positive impact over the long term. Feedback from community members has so far been very positive, and we plan to ensure co-creation workshops remain an integral approach for Spirit North.





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*"I believe it has been a trust building opportunity between the school and the community. The leaders of the program were phenomenal; they built amazing, trusting, compassionate and reliable relationships with each child and family!" - Parent*

# WHERE WE WORK

***Spirit North is a growing organization!  
Many communities listed here have Spirit North programs in multiple schools within their district.***

Last season, we engaged more communities and Indigenous youth than ever before, throughout Western Canada and into Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario as well. We look forward to expanding our impact even more next year!

*" I have seen the impacts of skiing on my students: resilience, positive attitudes, increased fitness, skill, health, increased team sense, belief in themselves, encouraging others, and joy! " - School Principal*



COMMUNITY	SCHOOL
Penticton (Penticton Indian Band)	Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School
West Bank	Sənsisyustən School
Chase	Chief Atahm School
Burns Lake	Morice Williams School
Terrace (Kitsumkalum)	Na Aksa Gylak'yoo School
Witset	Witset School
Kispiox	Kispiox Elementary School
Prince George	Van Bien Elementary School
	Heritage Elementary School
	Spruceland Traditional Elementary School
	Quinson Elementary School
	Sacred Heart Elementary School
	Westwood Elementary School
	Harwin Elementary School
	Ron Brent Elementary School
Little Red River Cree Nation	Fox Lake Elementary School
	Fox Lake JBS School
	John D'or Prairie School
	Sister Gloria School (Garden River)
Dene Tha First Nation	Dene Tha Community School
	Upper Hay River School

COMMUNITY	SCHOOL
Beaver First Nation	Rocky Lane School
Fort Vermilion	St. Mary's Elementary School
	Fort Vermilion Public School
Kikino Metis Settlement	Kikino School
Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement	Caslan School
Bigstone Cree Nation (Wabasca)	Oski Pasikoniwew Kamik School
	Mistassiniy School
	St. Theresa School
East Prairie Metis Settlement	Hillview Elementary School
Sucker Creek First Nation	Joussard School
Kapawe'no First Nation	Grouard Northland School
Peavine Metis Settlement	Bishop Routhier School (Peavine)
Gift Lake Metis Settlement	Gift Lake School
Peerless Trout First Nation	Peerless Lake School
	Kateri School (Trout Lake)
Loon River First Nation	Clarence Jaycox School
Whitefish Lake First Nation #459	Atikameg School
Woodland Cree First Nation	Cadotte Lake School
Tsuut'ina First Nation	Chilla Elementary School
	Tsuut'ina Jr. Sr. School





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**ALBERTA**



**SASKATCHEWAN**



**MANITOBA**



**ONTARIO**

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Stoney Nakoda First Nation	Exshaw School Nakoda Elementary School Morley Community School
Fishing Lake Metis Settlement Frog Lake First Nation	J.F. Dion School Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School Saddle Lake Cree Nation School Onchaminahos Elementary School Kihew Asiniy High School
Kehewin Cree Nation	Kehewin Elementary School Kehewin High School
Elizabeth Metis Settlement	Elizabeth School
Whitefish (Goodfish) First Nation #128	Pakan School
Beaver Lake Cree Nation	Amisk Community School
Heart Lake First Nation	Heart Lake Kohls School
Montana First Nation	Meskanahk Ka-Nipa-Wit School
Samson Cree First Nation	Nipisihkopahk Secondary School
Ermineskin	Ermineskin Jr. Sr. High School Ermineskin Elementary School
Louis Bull First Nation	Kisipatnahk School
Enoch Cree Nation	Kitaskinaw School
Paul Band First Nation	Paul First Nation School

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation	Alexis First Nation School
Stony Plain	Mother Earth's Children's Charter School
O'Chiese First Nation	O'Chiese School
Bighorn	Ta'otha Community School
Sunchild First Nation	Sunchild School
Chipewyan Prairie First Nation	Athabasca Delta Community School
Fort Murray First Nation	Anzac/Bill Woodward Community School
Janvier	Father R. Perin School
Conklin	Conklin Community School
Mistawasis	Mistawasis School
Montreal Lake	Senator Allen Bird Memorial School
Hall Lake	Sally Ross School
Black River	Black River Anishinabe School
Wanipigo	Wanipigo School
Berens River	Berens River School
Nelson House	Otetiskiwin Kiskinwamahtowekamik
Thunder Bay	Matawa Education Centre



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# IMPROVING HEALTH & EDUCATION

*Through established programs and projects designed specifically for participating communities, Spirit North is making a difference in the lives of Indigenous youth.*

*Our programs focus on sport and land-based activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, and our trained coaches share the most relevant, up-to-date health information in a format that engages and inspires youth.*

**In a survey of students and educators who participated in Spirit North programs...**

**90** % of students wanted to **EXERCISE MORE** after participating in Spirit North programs

**80** % of educators reported **POSITIVE CHANGES** in student behaviour

**97** % of students **LOOKED FORWARD** to Spirit North ski days

**100** % of educators say they would like Spirit North to **RETURN** to their schools

*"Every time I ski - it makes me feel like I want to be happy for my whole life."  
- Student, Black River First Nation*



"Our students are showing so much passion for sport and recreation outside of school hours now! Many are signing up for bike camp and community soccer this year... We feel very blessed to be a Spirit North school now!" - Teacher



## Engaging Indigenous Youth in Year-round Activity

With its new initiative in Burns Lake, BC, Spirit North is helping Indigenous youth pursue a healthy and active lifestyle throughout the year, by getting them involved in both cross-country skiing and mountain biking.

With the addition of 16 new mountain bikes, plus a trailer to tow them around, the students are able to get out to explore the roughly 100 kilometres of trails that surround the Babine Lake Reserve. "Many of these kids didn't have the opportunity to ski or go mountain biking

before, mostly because of the cost," says Rachelle van Zanten, Spirit North's Community Program Director for the Burns Lake area.

In Burns Lake and in other Northern BC communities, including Witset, Kitsumkalum and Kispiox, van Zanten says Spirit North is integrating Indigenous culture into the training. "In the first session we went out to the forest and discovered the plants and animals right around the school," she said, adding that the students then went over everything in their language classes.

# CONNECTING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

*Spirit North does a lot more than encourage healthy and active lifestyles for Indigenous youth; our programs help to keep communities connected as well!*

*In addition to Spirit North days at participating schools, we host multi-community ski festivals that bring schools, parents and youth together for a full day of sport and activity incorporating cultural exchange and traditional practices; ensuring knowledge is shared through activities on traditional lands.*

A survey of participants at these events and others showed they're having a positive impact...

**99** % ENJOYED SKI DAYS  
with Spirit North

**95** % of students "FEEL INCLUDED AND LIKE I BELONG"  
while participating in our programs

**95** % of students "FEEL LIKE I MATTER"  
after a day with Spirit North

"My child has had many positive impacts from skiing. I see my son learning how to ski. I see him learning about the nature around us and connecting back to the land, which warms my heart." - Parent



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*" Students who have attended regular ski sessions seem to be happier at school, more sociable with peers and their teachers, get along well with others and have more energy at school. They tried something new to them and every one of them felt success. This might help them be more open to trying new things in their life. They still talk about how much fun they had! "*

*- Teacher*



## Engaging Manitoba Indigenous Youth

At the inaugural Spirit North Manitoba Ski Festival, students from the First Nations communities of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Berens River, Hollow Water, Bloodvein and Black River got a chance to get out on the snowy trails of Manitoba's Grand Beach Provincial Park.

The first for Spirit North in the province, the event was designed in close consultation with community members who participated. All future programming will likewise be created for the community, by the community. It was a perfect way to celebrate the positive impact of being active through cross-country skiing and other sports, with Grade 4-8 students taking part in games and activities throughout the day, plus a fun ski race as well.

## Matawa Marks First Spirit North Project in Ontario

At the Kamview Nordic Centre in Thunder Bay, ON, students from the Matawa Education and Care Centre got to try out cross-country skiing (many for the first time) thanks to new Spirit North programming in the area. To celebrate this furthest foray east, Spirit North brought a host of experienced instructors to offer tips and guidance on the first ski day out.

Working with local store Fresh Air Experience, Spirit North was also able to provide 30 full sets of ski gear for the students, which will ensure they'll hit the trails as soon as the snow allows next season! "I get to learn something new, so it makes the day a lot better," said Mya Dixon, an 18-year-old participant from Eabametoong First Nation. "It's nice to be outside."

# BUILDING CAPACITY & RECONCILIATION

*In efforts to remedy the legacy and effects of residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 calls to action to all Canadians. This path toward reconciliation is a major pillar and driving force for Spirit North, which strives to build bridges between communities and provide resources and opportunities for Indigenous youth that were lacking before.*

**The calls to action are diverse and varied, but Spirit North has focused on the following...**

**ACTION #19** – we help close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, by promoting physical and mental health benefits of cross-country skiing and other activities

**ACTION #89** – we elevate sport and play as a fundamental part of health and well-being, and we promote activities in communities through local events and dedicated programming

**ACTION #90** – we collaborate with schools and communities to create programs that reflect local needs, and invest in resources and high-performance trainers to ensure these benefits last

## New Dual Language Signs at Nickel Plate

In late 2018, community members, Spirit North staff and others gathered at Nickel Plate Nordic Centre near Penticton, BC, to celebrate the unveiling of new dual language signs—in English and the Syilx/Okanagan language of nsyilxcən—that now grace the snowy trails.

A collaborative effort between the Syilx/Okanagan Nation, Spirit North and the Nickel Plate Nordic Centre, updating the signage involved engaging local language experts to help translate 30 ski trail names. Once the signs were finished and posted, local Elder and language instructor Rose Caldwell performed a smudging ceremony at the unveiling event.



IMAGES: MARK BRETT

"Being on the land is healing for us as Syilx Okanagan people and the trails give us an opportunity to practice healthy lifestyle choices and connect with our təmxwulaʔxw, the land. It is an amazing opportunity to have world-class coaching to inspire us as athletes, but more than anything it is a gift to experience the təmxwulaʔxw gliding by under our feet and witness the beauty of the mountain ecosystem as a community." - Language Teacher



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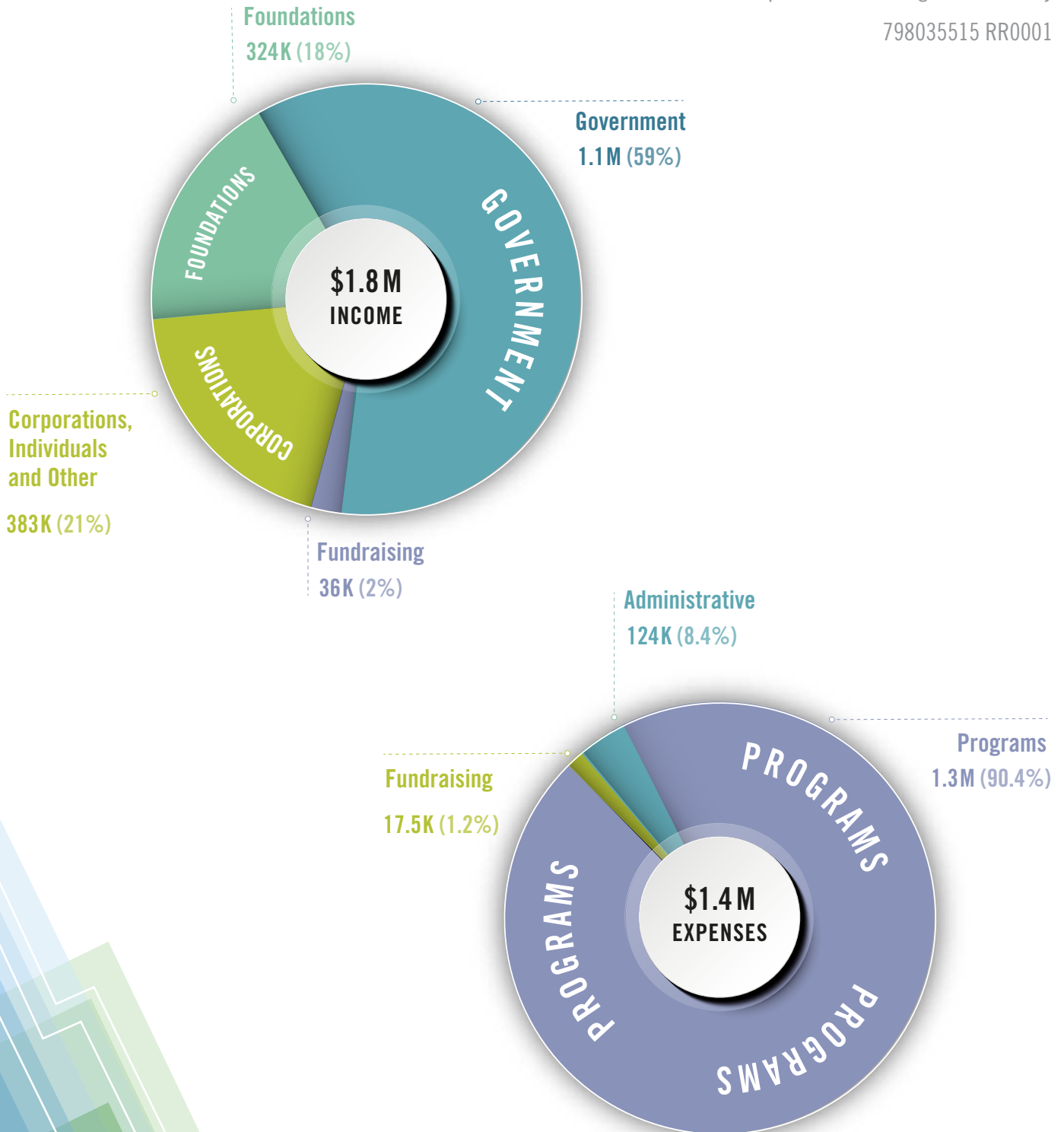


"Spirit North is making a difference in the lives of youth by providing them with services that are normally unattainable." - Teacher

# FINANCIALS

Spirit North is a Registered Charity

798035515 RR0001



# PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Spirit North would like to sincerely thank our partners and supporters.  
Without your generous support, none of this important work would be possible.



Indigenous and  
Northern Affairs Canada



**Julie George**

To learn how you can become a supporter please contact us at  
(587) 879-8933 or [info@spiritnorthxc.ca](mailto:info@spiritnorthxc.ca)



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