



ARTSCAN CIRCLE
THE ART OF DIALOGUE

2023 IMPACT REPORT

A message from our Board

A year with unique challenges

ArtsCan Circle has reached a critical moment in our history and our mandate to always return to the communities we serve. Your support is integral to accomplishing our mandate and keeping our promise to those we serve.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

112

Workshops

3000

Impacted

103

Instruments Shipped

50

Vounteers

25,000

KMS, Travelled by Artists

10

Artists

Our **Mission**

Our mission is art diplomacy, to co-create safe spaces and creative stages where **Indigenous Youth can thrive**. Through art-based programming, we open pathways of opportunity for youth to access creativity and express themselves in healthy ways. In doing so, we aim to create empathy and inspire actions that serve their rights, interests and future.

What **we do**

We respond to the unique needs of **each community** with co-created workshops and tools to bring art-based programs to life including music, visual, recording and performance art.

OUR STORY SO FAR

40,000+

harmonicas and countless violins,
keyboards, fiddles, ukuleles & guitars
donated and shipped



RESPECT

AGENCY

TRUST

CONNECTION

SPIRIT

THE ART OF DIALOGUE

Our programs are a canvas for youth and a model for co-creation under the Truth and Reconciliation, Call to Action #83.



Photo: Founder Mike Stevens and participant, Gjoa Haven, 2023

Twenty years since a chance encounter between Indigenous Youth and our founder, Mike Stevens, Canada's silence in confronting the inequalities facing First Nations, Metis, Innu and Inuit communities is more deafening than ever. Inspired by their story and those of Indigenous youth coast to coast, Artscan Circle began a journey of it's time to let me know they matter and raise their voices to Canada and the world.

Artscan Circle is a creative bridge between Indigenous communities and Canada's capacity to change. We invoke dialogue about the past, present and future we share through the reformative power of art.

MEET OUR TEAM

People behind the scenes



KIRK BAILEY
CHAIRPERSON



LESLIE QAMMAMIQ
BOARD MEMBER



Kenneth McGregor
BOARD MEMBER



LAURA VUKSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MELISSA SAVAGE
OPERATIONS MANAGER



RYAN CUNNINGHAM
BOARD MEMBER

Programs

PIKANGIKUM



“Keyboard, Piano and Theory Workshops”

“My eagerness for learning how to play the piano has remained constant ever since I began taking part in this workshop led by a top-notch music teacher Morris George-Ellington.”

— Participant

For almost 20 years, Artscan Circle has been visiting Pikangikum, an Objibwe fly-in community in NW Ontario. During the Pandemic, we launched an after-school music program that runs four times a week. Led by music teacher Morris, students learn keyboard, piano and music theory.

With TD Bank's support, Artscan Circle shipped the students a brand-new Yamaha piano for Indigenous Month 2022 via plane. The public support from the media coverage has been tremendous. Two more donated pianos—a Baby Grand and Upright Piano—were donated. Volunteers drove the pianos strapped down in a U-Haul Truck from Toronto to Red Lake. Our sponsors, North Star Airlines, flew the precious cargo over Red Lake to the community.



Programs

FORT ALBANY

“Music Video Workshop”

Straight from the youth of Fort Albany, 'Paradise' is a heart song to contemporary Rez life. Its lyrics and melody will inspire you. "Paradise" was created by the Fort Albany Youth with artists facilitators Jeremiah Otis, filmmaker Brett Rogers, novelist Joseph Boyden and our Executive Director Laura Vukson in a Music Video Workshop held from March 27 - April 3, 2023, at the community hall and the outdoors.

Participants learned how to create a storyboard, write lyrics, sing, record, film, edit and teamwork. Backpacks with artistic supplies and hoodies were shipped to the community. Volunteers cooked meals for the youth each day.

Artscan Circle was also invited to participate in the Treaty Walking Ceremony on the ice road, featured in the music video. On the last evening, the premiere for "Paradise" was held at the hall, and over 200 community members attended. The music video was so successful that we were invited to facilitate workshops at their evacuation site—Niagara Falls, and repeatedly asked when Artscan Circle would return to Fort Albany.



Programs

ATTAWAPISKAT

“Visual Arts Workshop”

“I have to say it was one of the best residencies I’ve been on in a while. Keith is so great with the students and knowledgeable of Indigenous history and art. They want him to go back up someday to do the project with graffiti art and spray paint.”

— Artist Cindy Paul

Indigenous artists **Cindy Paul and Keith Calihoo** flew to Attawapiskat in the spring and facilitated a week-long visual arts workshop alongside teacher Nicole Arsenault. The students created their designs on hoodies as well as a stunning mural. At the end of the week, a showcase and feast were held at the school and open to all community members.

ArtsCan Circle shipped 20 backpacks filled with artistic tools for each student to take home, as well as art supplies for the workshop.



programs

KUUJJUAQ

We've partnered up with the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre in the Nunavik region of Quebec. This fall, 12 guitars, 12 stands, music theory books and strings donated by Rotherglen School in Oakville, ON., were shipped to the centre. Artscan Circle will send two artist mentors for a Winter 2024 Workshop.

programs

Chateh

Online Musical Lessons & Music Workshop

We partnered with Annette Music Studio in Toronto. Chateh students participate in weekly one-on-one Zoom lessons with their certified instructors. Due to the climate crisis, Chateh has been evacuated three times this year due to the fear of flooding and forest fires. Artscan Circle Workshop and Elder Jams have been postponed till the end of the year.

evacuation site

Niagara Falls

Artscan Circle was invited to facilitate a Beading and Filmmaking Workshop in Niagara Falls, where Fort Albany residents had been evacuated, due to fear of flooding. Indigenous artists Celine and Matthew Vukson, filmmaker Brett Rogers, and ED Laura Vukson met up with the community for a two-day workshop.

Did you know?

In 2023, Fort Albany, Attawpiskat, and Chateh evacuated due to fear of flooding and/or forest fires. Chateh has evacuated 3x.



Art is our instrument of impact

INSTRUMENTS

“From tuning and restringing donated guitars to fretwork and light repair to helping keep our storage unit organized and labelled, our volunteers Vince, Joe and Peter helped us maintain our instrument donations.

We’re extremely grateful to each of them for their hard work and support. “

— Melissa Savage,
Operations Manager

We’d like to thank the instrument donors, North Star Airlines and volunteers for their incredible support. In 2023, Artscan Circle shipped 101 instruments and two pianos to communities in need across the North.



THE GUITAR PROJECT



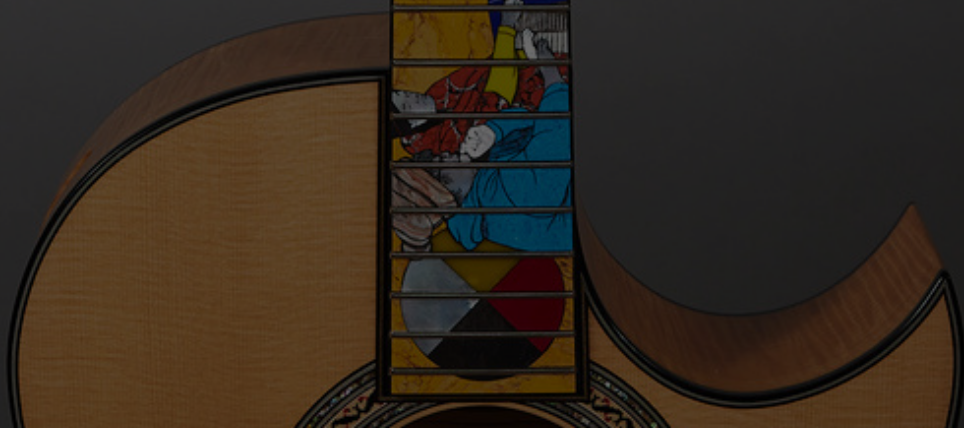
Art is our instrument of impact. To celebrate twenty years of creating safe and artistic spaces for Indigenous youth, Grit Laskin has built by hand a literal instrument in recognition of our mandate: a gorgeously crafted acoustic guitar with inlay art on the neck that, in Grit's words, "is dedicated to honouring Artscan Circle, and especially the young people from remote communities who are participating in and discovering their creative musicality."



The guitar's inlay, including Artscan's logo designed by renowned Anishnaabe artist Phil Cote, as well as renderings of founder and harmonica virtuoso Mike Stevens and numerous Indigenous youth he's collaborated with over the years, tells the story of cultural exchange while highlighting the understanding that the youth are forever, and so are we.

We think of the guitar as a musical talking stick, and our dream is to see this instrument travel our country and land in the hands of countless young people who will tell their artistic truths. Join us in our mission of becoming ambassadors of art and witness how this truly can speak louder than words.

We're pleased to announce that along with the creation of this guitar, we've also created a residency that will cover all costs for one youth from a remote community to participate in Canada's most prestigious guitar-making workshop run by none other than the world-renowned Sergei De Jong in Chelsea, Quebec.



We couldn't have
done it without
your generous

SUPPORT.



THANK YOU

to all our donors
and volunteers.



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