

Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award

Glooscap First Nation Application

By definition community spirit is a willingness and desire to participate in activities that promote a community. It is associated with voluntary work, and gestures of goodwill by residents and local businesses. But at its core, community spirit is much more than that. It's the vibe of the community, the aura it gives off. That feeling you get when you walk on the peaceful trails, or visit a charming local business. The sound of children laughing, or the sight of a youth helping an elder garden.

When I first discovered the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award I became very excited to apply on behalf of Glooscap First Nation. The award criteria recognizes qualities of true community spirit, including building on unique community strengths, a high rate of participation among community members, and a united focus to create an enduring community. Glooscap is all of these things, and so much more. It is the perfect example of a community filled with spirit and pride.

This thriving community owes its successes to each and every community member. Glooscap is filled with the most optimistic people, willing to work hard to provide a better tomorrow for future generations. Through the stories provided below, you will discover why members of Glooscap think it is the best place to live, to raise their children, to share their culture, and to form long-lasting relationships. I appreciate your time and consideration of our wonderful community for the Lieutenant Governors Community Spirit award. I hope you enjoy reading about the accomplishments of our small, but mighty community, and look forward to hearing your response.

Wela'liq (Thank You),

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Glooscap First Nation Chief and Council (Supporting Community Group)

In a Mi'kmaw Community Chief and Council are the community leaders and decision-makers, and are highly respected by community members. They are trusted to represent the community's core values, to make the best decisions on behalf of the community, and to lead the community towards a prosperous future.

In 2013, a newly elected Chief and Council began the development of a ten-year community plan. The intent of the plan was to ensure open, transparent, and accountable leadership that works closely with community members to help our vision become a reality. The *Glooscap First Nation Community Plan* builds on the known strengths of Glooscap, and continues to evolve and grow with the community.

Mission: Maintaining a sustainable community through our people, for our people.

Vision: We recognize, honor, and take pride in Glooscap First Nation for its unique strengths and identify. Our population is growing and thriving and committed to the next generations. We are a balanced, well community, living according to the seven sacred teachings. We have thriving people, thriving culture and language, thriving infrastructure, thriving leadership, thriving partnerships and relationships, thriving economic development, and thriving land.

While building community spirit is important in all communities, it is of particular importance in Mi'kmaw communities. Due to the cultural genocide of the Mi'kmaw people that took place for almost a century, many descendants feel ashamed of their culture and heritage. Through the leadership of Council, and the resilience of our people, we are learning to be proud, and excited to share our culture.

Chief and Council also have prioritized building healthy partnerships and relationships, which is essential to allowing the community to prosper and grow. This is especially true after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report in 2015, which calls upon all levels of government to take action in the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.

GFN Health and Healing Centre

Health and wellness refers to more than just a person's physical state of well-being. Consider health and wellness to be like the eight-point star, a symbol of great significance to the Mi'kmaq. Each point on the star represents a dimension of wellness in one's life – in order to build a truly healthy community, all dimensions of wellness must be attended to.

In the community of Glooscap, the Health and Healing Centre is much more than a place to seek physical wellness. Since its establishment in March 2000, it has become a beacon of hope, safety, strength, and support for community members. Health Director Charlotte Warrington, began her career at the health centre as a Summer Student, over 18 years ago. She says "the Health Centre is the heart of the community. People feel safe to come here and visit the staff, and we are able to help our community members. Just as the beat of the drum represents the heartbeat of Mother Nature, the health centre is the heart of this community".

The Health and Healing Centres' mission is to "honor and respect community members, to provide health services to the best of our ability, and to improve health and wellness". The staff of the health centre work as a united front to improve the health and well-being of the entire community. Some of the most popular programming and events are an annual Family Fun Day, a monthly Lunch and Learn, and a weekly After-School Program. These events have fantastic community participation, and allow staff and community members to build relationships, and learn in a safe environment.

Through programs like the Mi'kmaw Physical Activity Leadership (MPAL) program, the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI), and the Native Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselling Association (NADACA), the Centre is able to support community members of all ages, and walks of life.

Glooscap Ventures (Supporting Community Group)

Established in 2014, Glooscap Ventures is focused on helping their Glooscap Family thrive. As a company that is 100% owned by the Community, Ventures role is to manage community business, with the goal of facilitating growth and increased community capacity. The profits from these businesses are reinvested in ways that enable the community, and its members, to become more spirited and full-of-life with each passing year.

Mission: Do something today that makes our community more prosperous than it was yesterday.

Ventures mission extends far beyond the community of Glooscap. Through their efforts they are able to create a model for First Nations' economic development that honors heritage, resurrects ancient wisdom and provides case studies that other communities can learn from. The work they do also brings opportunities to neighboring communities and the surrounding region.

One of Ventures most exciting endeavours is the Glooscap Landing Project. The Landing is a phased project that will host multiple businesses including a market and heritage centre. These projects will highlight the skills and talents of our community members by displaying local art and selling handmade crafts. The Grand Opening of the Landing gas station in May 2018 was well-attended, and a historic day for the community of Glooscap.

In 2017, in recognition of the work done through Glooscap Ventures, Glooscap First Nation was named as the National Indigenous Economic Development Community of the year. The award is presented to an Indigenous community who displays strong economic development initiatives. Glooscap Ventures' Audrey Michaud says "I would say Ventures has helped with putting Glooscap First Nation on the map in terms of economic development. I think a sense of added pride has come out of the many projects that Glooscap Ventures has helped develop. I can feel it when I hear community members and staff talk about the Landing and the corner location".

Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP)

In 2016 Glooscap First Nation was one of three communities in Atlantic Canada to participate in a pilot project known as Comprehensive Community Planning (CCP). CCP is a community-engagement based approach to creating a holistic community plan. The resulting document is meant to be a guide, allowing the community to move forward together to benefit all members, and future generations.

The process of developing the comprehensive community plan, was as important as the actual document itself. A community member was hired as the CCP Coordinator, and called herself the 'dream collector'. The plan was created by the community, as the coordinator guided them through engagement sessions, surveys, open-houses, and open conversation with community members. The process brought together community members of all ages and walks-of-life, to work collaboratively. This allowed community members to heal from past experiences, and to plan for the future. The process also helped members of GFN to identify what their vision for the future is, and what their core values are.

Community Mission: Maintaining a sustainable community through our people, for our people.

Community Vision: We are a well-balanced community living according to the seven sacred teachings, committed to the next generations as we work in unity to become a forward-thinking, self-sustaining community. We honor our past and look towards our future. We are a proud First Nation community that strives to make connections with the world around us.

The resulting document demonstrates the communities' dedication to the future of Glooscap and themselves. The CCP document will be released in Summer 2018, and will be a living document that will be updated, monitored, evaluated, and owned by community. Through an ongoing process of implementation, the community will continue to accomplish great things and community spirit will be passed on through generations.

Glooscap First Nation Family Recreation Committee (Supporting Community Group)

With the implementation of the *Glooscap First Nation Community Plan* came new jobs and homes, causing a change in demographics as community members began to grow their families. In 2016 community Elder, Terrell Mudge, came to the Health Centre to discuss the need for a playground in the community. This conversation sparked the creation of the GFN Family Recreation Committee – a volunteer-driven group which uses the strengths of our community members to serve the recreational needs of the community. A diverse committee membership ensures that Elders, youth, and women are all well-represented, and considered when decisions are being made.

The GFN Family Recreation Committee uses the strengths of the community to facilitate positive progress. Since the establishment of the GFN Family Recreation Committee, community members are able to contribute to projects and initiatives that are happening in the community. Projects the committee has supported includes the expansion of community trails, recruitment of new volunteers, growth of the community garden, and the development of an outdoor recreational facility. They have also supported community participation in the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Summer Games and the North American Indigenous Games.

Fund-raising and projects involving volunteerism have had a major impact on the communities' ability to work together to create positive change. Community members see their peers putting effort into improving our home, and have the chance to learn about the exciting opportunities and initiatives going on. Through volunteerism, the recreation committee encourages others to get involved and contribute to community growth. The BBQ fund-raiser, held for 8 weekends each summer, is one of the most successful events held by the committee. It not only raises funds for recreational initiatives, but engages new volunteers, and highlights projects the community is engaged in.

GFN Family Recreation and Culture Park and Playground

Following the establishment of the GFN Family Recreation Committee, development of an outdoor recreational space was identified as a priority. Families in the community were seeking more opportunities to participate in a range of activities, and aging adults were in need of ways to be physically and socially active. The community needed to increase its capacity to host organized programming and events, and to enjoy unstructured play with family. An outdoor recreational facility would allow for the community to connect with their natural environment, learn about their culture, and host large events like Powwows and Mawiomis.

In 2016 Council designated a parcel of land to recreational purposes and the Family Recreation Committee began planning. They worked with the NS Dept. of Communities, Culture, and Heritage, and UPLAND Urban Planning and Design to create a concept plan for the space. Through discussions with the Family Recreation Committee, hiring of a community liaison, and a community consultation session, UPLAND produced the *GFN Family Recreation and Culture Park* Concept Plan. This document outlines a development and design narrative, which will guide Council, and the committee, as they move forward with developing the land. In October 2017 UPLAND and Glooscap First Nation received the Atlantic Planning Institution (API) Planning Excellence Award, in the category of Community Outreach and Communication for their work on the GFN Family Recreation and Culture Park Project.

The first phase of the project is the playground. Through fundraising, applying for grants, and support from Council installation of the playground is set for August 2018! A contest was held within the community to name the playground and 13 names were submitted. The winning name was “Ke’ Milita’nej”, which is the Mi’kmaw word for “Lets Play”, and was submitted by community member Lorraine Smith-Collins.

Mi'kmaw Seniors and Elders Society of Kluscap First Nation (Supporting Community Group)

Seniors and Elders have always played a major and fundamental role in Glooscap First Nation. As a Mi'kmaw community, respect for Elders is one of our most sacred values. Community Elder Lorraine Whitman says "Elders contribute to all events in the community through smudging, prayers, and offering teachings. They are role models for future generations, and their teachings - nobody can put a price on"

While seniors and Elders have always been active members of the community, in 2015 they became formally established as a Society. Shortly following this occurrence, they contracted *See Meaning Graphic Facilitation* to help establish their united vision and mission.

Mission: a group of senior citizens committed to the support of, and fellowship of seniors in our community and surrounding areas, while increasing the recognition of seniors as a most respected and valuable resource.

Vision: to live actively in a way that reflects Mi'kmaq culture, heritage and way of life, while enhancing their quality of life socially, mentally, physically and spiritually.

The Mi'kmaw Seniors and Elders Society of Kluscap First Nation aim to create awareness of Native culture and history, promote holistic health, and provide a safe and culturally-sensitive facility for recreational and social events. These individuals seek to improve the wellness of all seniors and elders, and open their membership up to non-native individuals who want to participate or learn. By participating in community events, Elders are able to contribute to the community as a whole. Elders are often invited to neighboring communities and establishments to represent First Nation communities, and to share their knowledge and teachings.

Youth of Glooscap First Nation

As the traditional proverb goes “It takes a village to raise a child”. As a tight-knit rural community, members of Glooscap often rely on each other to educate and care for our youth. Glooscap supports their youth through a variety of programming and training opportunities. Programs like the after-school program, and the Girls Melkitai program help youth build the knowledge and self-confidence to be healthy and active. Through the summer student program, youth are able to re-connect with their community and culture, and build relationships with Mi’kmaw peers. They also get to contribute to the community, which brings about feelings of pride and connected-ness.

The Red Road Project hires a community youth to support and promote abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Our youth Rep, Skylar McGuire, attends annual training sessions to learn about Mi’kmaw Culture and Traditions, and shares this knowledge and experience at events held in the community. Kaden Kenny has participated in the L’nu Kamakn Snowboard Team for the past 4 years. In order to be a team member you must remain drug and alcohol free, and maintain a C+ average in school. Through the L’nu Kamakn program, Kaden received his CASI Level 1 Snowboard Instructor Certificate, and will be hired as a program instructor in following seasons! In 2016, with the support of a coach and mentor, Emma Atwell picked up a bow for her first time. Emma competed in the Nova Scotia Mi’kmaw Summer Games in 2016, receiving a gold in her age category! She then went on to compete in the 2017 North American Indigenous Games, in which she received sixth place.

Young people are the future of the community, and the motivators behind the legacy we hope to leave behind. Through supporting the endeavours of young members, and assisting the development of new skills, we ensure a future that has strong leadership and positive role models.

Conclusion

There are so many things that contribute to the Community Spirit, which can be seen and felt, in the Community of Glooscap First Nation. While you have read of some of the successes of the community, this application only touches on a few the phenomenal experiences and opportunities in Glooscap.

As a united front, the community has worked tirelessly to achieve the mission of maintaining a sustainable community for the people, by the people. Glooscap has truly used the strengths of its individual members to increase its capacity for community development and growth. Through educational and social opportunities, and highlighting the skills and talents of our community members, we have ensured Glooscap will continue to thrive for years to come.

We have maintained great relationships with entities such as the Province of Nova Scotia, the RCMP, Nova Scotia Power, and the Municipality of the District of West Hants and Kings County. We have also created new partnerships with local businesses and establishments such as Ski Martock, Kings Edgehill School, Glooscap Heritage Archery Association, Greco, and Tim Hortons. In just the past year the community has built two new gas stations, added new offices into the Band Hall, began the development of an outdoor recreational facility, and a new community centre. These are only a few of the amazing projects, and all this while maintaining the services offered by the Band Office and Health and Healing Centre year-round.

We are very proud of our community and our culture. In order to truly understand the essence of Glooscap First Nation, you're just going to have to come visit. Wela'lioq!