

# ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13 & 5th Anniversary Report



"We are the Canadian Roots Exchange, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth who believe that in order to bridge the gap between Canada's peoples, we need to become educated and aware of the teachings, triumphs, and daily realities of our Indigenous communities."



## WHO WE ARE

Canadian Roots Exchange is a registered charity (registration number 832296602RR0001) that provides Indigenous-based leadership, learning and reconciliation experiences to every youth that participates in our programs. CRE organizes four main types of activities: exchange programs, workshops, conferences, and inter-generational community events. Central to CRE programming is the need to bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. Regardless of the activity, we believe that having dialogue is necessary to foster understanding and reconciliation.

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Ahneen all young people, our alumni, and those we have yet to meet. I want to thank you for the past five years of adventure, hilarity, and learning. We are all life-long learners at our very best, and I have and continue to learn so much from all of you. Together, we have travelled the length and breadth of Canada, we have laughed, we have cried, we have fought, and we have made up because that's what people who care deeply do. We have met some truly amazing people on our journeys together, been awed by way awesome Elders, been entertained by drums, flutes, and through simple guitars and song. We have learned even where there is pain there is an abundance of joy and the gift of sharing. We have eaten at many tables, some humble and some overflowing with the largesse of pomp and circumstance. We have given and we have taken, and through it all we have all learned to be truly grateful. What an opportunity, what a challenge and what a contribution we have all experienced and expressed. The Canadian Roots Exchange has been a singularly significant way to spend my time and effort, extending my hand and my heart to the youth of Canada, bringing people together, and sharing in the building of positive mutual relations and a better Canada.



I continue to share my experience with each of you everywhere I go, and I invite anyone who will listen to join us and meet the Indigenous peoples of this country in their own homes, communities, and on their own terms. We have much work to do to ensure there is a deeper understanding and respect for each other everywhere. We have met many young people who will one day sit as policy makers, lawyers, judges, and more importantly, who will parent the next generation. Thank you, each one of you, for everything you have contributed, for the time you have taken, for your hopes and dreams, and for the gifts you have shared with me and with those you have met through this organization. I am looking forward to the next five years of travel, engagement, learning, and the meals we will share as we explore and build a Canada we can all be proud of.

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux,  
Chair, Canadian Roots Exchange  
Thunder Bay, Ontario

*"So, together we travel to cities, towns, and traditional territories across Canada in an effort to break down stereotypes, open a dialogue, and build honest relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living on this land."*

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## OUR PHILOSOPHY

1. **Building networks of knowledge and understanding** between and amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and with Indigenous communities across Canada.
2. **Seeking equal representation** of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in every level of the organization.
3. **Leading through our youth**, from visioning and planning, to implementing programs, and evaluating our progress.
4. **Practicing what we preach** as we learn the ways of life and teachings of our host communities.



5. **Creating safe spaces for dialogue** in all our programs, because we understand the importance of honest and open discussion.
6. **Discovering positive realities** and understanding and appreciating the strengths of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and Indigenous peoples.
7. **Including Indigenous world views** in every day thought, because we promote the relevance of Indigenous teachings for all individuals and communities.
8. **Having fun together**, because laughter is one of the best ways to build relationships.

## IMPACT TO DATE

### MAJOR MILESTONES

- 2008 Canadian Roots Exchange was **founded**.
- 2009 CRE's inaugural exchange across the Canadian Shield involving a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth takes place. Shortly after, "**Shielded Minds**", a groundbreaking film documenting the group's journey provides viewers with a new appreciation for Indigenous communities.
- 2010 CRE releases "**Journey to Oz**", a documentary film of youth witnessing the struggles, realities, and the enduring hope of the community in Mishkeegogamang First Nation.
- 2012 CRE organizes the youth component of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Toronto** called "The Meeting Place". Youth from Ontario and Quebec participate in 2 day of training and reconciliation sessions with CRE's Chair and several Elders. A short film was produced to capture the learnings of the youth and their messages of hope with the survivors of the Government Run Residential School System.
- 2012 CRE pilots its **Youth Reconciliation Initiative** with trained youth facilitators forming 5 teams across Canada. Youth leaders were trained with a focus on reconciliation and conflict resolution and ways youth from First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities can make connections and linkages with other cultural communities.
- 2013 CRE hosts its first **National Youth Conference** in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The conference which was fully facilitated by youth for youth allows participants to gather and dispel stereotypes, resolve conflicts and facilitate reconciliation amongst and through youth.
- 2013 CRE expands its Youth Reconciliation Initiative to include 9 teams of youth working in 7 different provinces and territories. Teams will reach over 800 youth across the country through exchanges, workshops and gatherings in their regions.

## Youth Engagement & Community Impact

In the past 5 years, Canadian Roots Exchange has successfully implemented **30 exchanges** or forums and produced 2 documentaries. To date over **1,500 youth** have participated in CRE programs. In our short history, we have organized youth activities in 10 different provinces or territories and interest in our programs continue to grow.

Canadian Roots Exchange engages active youth volunteers who are critical to our programming. As part our Youth Reconciliation Initiative, teams of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are provided with training and support to lead activities in their regions. These teams will be organizing exchanges and other local activities to reach youth in their communities. CRE engages **30 active volunteers** in different parts of the country. Collectively, our youth volunteers contribute over **2,000 volunteer hours** annually.

We are currently expanding our presence in different parts of the country through active teams of youth.

### CRE ACTIVE YOUTH RECONCILIATION TEAMS 2013-14



*"Canadian Roots really helped eradicate any stereotypes I might have had...The organization helped humanize Indigenous issues and shed light on Canada's murky past."*

*Ishita Petkar, 19  
Toronto*



## SPOTLIGHT

Kitchenumaykoosib Inninuwig (KI) First Nations  
June Event



In June 2013, youth from Kitchenumaykoosib Inninuwig (K.I.) First Nation launched an open call for invitations to Canadians to live in their community during National Aboriginal Week. Visitors had the privilege of living with local families in their homes for a week to see first-hand the living conditions on the reserve and to break down stereotypes that divides Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Two of CRE's active youth volunteers (Tamara Pokrupa-Nahanni and Emily Gwun-Shun Lennon) represented CRE alongside 41 other Canadians to learn from the youth of K.I. and their messages of hope and community spirit.

# YOUTH FOCUS

**Kerri Tattuinee** 25, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut & Wolfville, Nova Scotia

## **In what capacities have you been involved with Canadian Roots?**

I was a panelist on the “Young Community Leaders” panel as well as a presenter at the 2013 National Conference. I am a current Youth Reconciliation Leader working out of Acadia University.



## **How did being in these roles influence you?**

I realized more than ever that we need more opportunities to learn these practical skills, and to network amongst youth ourselves, to share and learn from each other’s stories and perspectives, as different or as similar as they may be. I have brought other perspectives and ideas in to my work, and will utilize my newly formed friendships for the mutual betterment of our lives as young Canadians.

## **Has your experience with the organization influenced your perspective on Indigenous issues and/or the country and its history?**

Canadian Roots was an eye opening experience to realize the experience of Indigenous Peoples outside of my own understanding of Inuit communities, and the realities we face as northern peoples. I look forward to more interactions with such engaged young people, and the opportunity to share this story with my other Canadians who are willing to learn some things they haven’t ever had any exposure to. This is an important piece to the ‘puzzle’ or mosaic our great country is made of.

**Emily Gwun-Shun Lennon** 23, Montreal & Edmonton

## **In what capacities have you worked with Canadian Roots?**

I joined the Montreal team as a Youth Reconciliation Leader in fall 2012. I participated in the “Young Community Leaders” panel and presented at the national conference in March 2013. I also had the privilege of being a representative of CRE at a national gathering organized by youth in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug in June 2013.



## **How have these roles influenced you?**

Not only has this experience reminded me of the influence that youth can engender, but also showed me the importance of fostering real relationships between people across the country. I have learned a great deal from my fellow youth leaders. Canadian Roots has given me the opportunity to develop new skills that I can then bring back to my community.

## **How has your view and connection to Indigenous communities changed as a result of your involvement with Canadian Roots?**

Canadian Roots was instrumental in facilitating my ongoing quest to understand what ‘reconciliation’ and ‘decolonization’ mean. It has given me a new, more critical, lens with which I can peer into Canadian history as a non-Indigenous youth. It also forces me to be more reflexive and consider how my own ancestors fit into this history. Working with Canadian Roots is proof that, little by little, people of all backgrounds are coming together to learn from one another and to make positive, sustainable change.

## Exchanges: “Exploring our own backyard”

Canada through in-depth and hands-on experiences, immersed within the historical and contemporary contexts that shape everyday Indigenous lives. Exchanges range from 5 days to 3 weeks and each program differs; some have a focus on camping and canoeing while others focus on health services or other themes. Exchanges emphasize personal growth and leadership development through individual and group learning, and personal reflection facilitated by group leaders and educators from each community.

CRE creates a diverse team of youth whereby half of the youth are from First Nations, Inuit or Métis backgrounds and the other half of the group from non-Indigenous backgrounds. Exchanges are instrumental in allowing youth from different backgrounds to develop friendships and cultivate a better understanding of the diversity of Canada. To date, CRE has offered 27 exchanges with the goal of having programs in every province and territory in the near future.

## Algonquin Park - Silver Lake Pow Wow Exchange

Where: Algonquin Park and Silver Lake

When: August 2012 and August 2013

During this week long canoe and Pow Wow educational program, participants spend time with the Algonquin People of Silver Lake. The exchange includes daily sunrise and sunset ceremonies and daily sharing circles. One of the highlights is staying in Algonquin Park with Nokomis Jane who provides daily teachings including a guided nature walk through the park where participants learn more about traditional medicines, Algonquin history and take part in a full moon ceremony. The second half of this exchange typically concludes with the group volunteering at the Silver Lake Pow Wow where they have an opportunity to meet many amazing community members and learn more about the history and contemporary issues in the region.





## Interactive Workshops: "Educating and understanding – youth to youth"

Canadian Roots delivers youth-led workshops that raise awareness of Indigenous history, culture and current realities. In 2012, CRE launched the Youth Reconciliation Initiative involving 18 youth. This initiative was expanded to include 26 youth facilitators in 9 different communities. We currently have active teams in Vancouver Area, Saskatoon, Toronto Area, Winnipeg, London, Montreal Area, Arviat (Nunavut), Kuujjuaq and Wolfville (Nova Scotia). We are currently in the process of adding additional teams in Northern Ontario before year's end and are continually looking to support new teams of youth in different communities across Canada.

Youth teams are trained with a focus on reconciliation and conflict resolution and ways youth from First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities can make connections and linkages with other cultural communities.

Workshops are facilitated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and help participants to dispel stereotypes and deepen their knowledge of the history including the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous peoples and other diverse communities across Canada.

## Canadian Roots Exchange: 1st National Youth Conference: March 22-24, 2013

Oskayak High School, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Facilitated by youth for youth, 90 participants from 9 provinces and territories attended CRE's first national conference held at Oskayak (meaning "young person" in Cree language) High School, a school grounded in Cree education.

The conference allowed participants to gather and dispel stereotypes, resolve conflicts and develop national youth networks.

Some workshop topics included: Challenging stigma related to mental health and addictions, Culturally relevant story telling, Building bridges between Indigenous and newcomer youth, and Arts-based Reconciliation through spoken word and drawing.

We are excited to return to hold our second National Youth Conference at Oskayak High School from March 26-28, 2014. You can contribute attending, presenting or being a sponsor for our national conference! Please visit our website to find out details about upcoming conferences.





## Conferences and Gatherings: "Uniting youth to create dialogue"



Conferences and gatherings allow youth to participate in meaningful dialogue and cultural traditions. Ranging from one to three days, these gatherings provide a space for youth to further develop understanding of Canada's First Peoples and each other.



In June 2012, CRE organized the youth component of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Toronto called "The Meeting Place". Youth from Ontario and Quebec participated in 2 days of training and reconciliation sessions with the CRE Chair, Elders and Educators. A short film capturing the learnings of the youth participants and their messages of hope was shared with the survivors of the Government Run Residential School System.



In March 2013, CRE organized a full day youth gathering in Akwesasne, facilitated by a leadership team comprised of youth from Ottawa and Akwesasne. Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth living in Ottawa engaged in dialogue with Mohawk youth in Akwesasne for a day of educational, cultural and recreational activities. Speakers and activities explored cultural identity, history and there were cultural performances such as jingle dancers, drummers and a young hip-hop artist from a nearby Indigenous community.



## Community Events – "Learning together"

### Indigenous Bus Tour of Toronto Film screenings

CRE has organized the Indigenous Bus Tour of Toronto through the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. The guided tour includes visits to Indigenous sites of significance in Toronto and provides youth with a background of Indigenous history in Toronto. The tour enables participants to be more aware of the history behind street names and sites that they may pass by everyday without realizing their significance.

CRE has screened films for community members including: "3rd World Canada" by Andrée Cazabon, "Life on the Reserve" by Graham Shonfield, and "Reel Injun" by Neil Diamond. The discussions that follow are a key component to facilitate dialogue. Audience members are encouraged to share their thoughts on the subject explored. The discussions also allow youth to be made aware of different projects, events and ways to get involved in their own communities.



## OUR TEAM

### Staff (2013)

Candice Jacko, *Administrative Officer*  
vibhor garg, *Executive Director*  
Alysha Li, *Summer Intern 2013*  
Rose Goulais (until April 2013)  
Sasha Chabot-Gaspé (until April 2013)

### Youth Reconciliation Leaders & Facilitators (2012-present)

Ali Barnaby  
Alysha Li  
Angela Salamanca  
April Domingo  
Celina Nahanni  
Courtney Wemigwans  
Emily Gwun-Shun Lennon  
Graham Shonfield  
Hala Sayed  
Holly Laforge  
Innah Gaspar  
Ivan Arturo Escobar  
Jaya Bordeleau-Cass  
Joey Shaw  
Jordan Omand  
Kanentakwas David  
Kerri Tattuinee  
Latisha Cairo Reddick  
Maryam Russel  
Mercedes Peters  
Nicole Wemigwans  
Olivia Ikey  
Shayne Martell  
Suzy Kauki Watt  
Tamara Pokrupa-Nahanni  
Taylor Sugar  
Tristan Martell  
Tessa Terbasket  
Weyni Abraha  
Widia Larivière

### Board of Directors (2013)

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux  
Diana Pirri  
Judith Rae  
Evan Chamakese  
Justin Wiebe  
David Berkal (until July 2013)  
Joseph Morrison (until July 2013)  
Karen Isaacs (until February 2013)

### Exchange Leaders (2013)

Celina Nahanni  
Holly Laforge  
Justin Leigh Struss  
Kevin Dreaver  
Lynzii Taibossigai

### Founding Members (2008)

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux  
David Berkal  
Ronan Macparland



## OUR SUPPORTERS

University of Toronto  
University of Toronto - First Nation House  
University of Toronto - Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work  
Department of Canadian Heritage  
Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training  
Laidlaw Foundation  
Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP  
Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts (Dalhousie)  
City of Toronto  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada  
University of Western Ontario - Indigenous Student Services  
University of Western Ontario - Ivey Business School



## ACTIVE COMMUNITIES & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Garden River First Nation  
Kuujjuaq, Quebec  
London, Ontario  
Mishkeegogamang First Nation  
M'Chigeeng First Nation  
Montreal, Quebec  
Moose Cree First Nation  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Serpent River First Nation  
Shingwauk Kinooamaage Gamig  
Six Nations on the River Grand  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
Toronto, Ontario  
Vancouver - Coast Salish, British Columbia  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

# AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2013

### ASSETS

Current assets	
Cash	\$8,476
Guaranteed investment certificates	7,525
Amounts receivable	46,997
HST recoverable	4,841
	<u>\$67,839</u>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$16,029
Deferred revenue	5,000
	<u>21,029</u>
Net assets	<u>46,810</u>
	<u>\$67,839</u>

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2013

### REVENUE

Grants	\$227,299
Earned income	48,619
Contributed materials and services	44,734
Donations	33,791
Interest	177
	<u>\$354,620</u>

### EXPENSES

Personnel	\$126,081
Participant travel and accommodation	75,702
Program	51,500
Rent	27,360
Documentary production	16,262
Honoraria	16,235
Office and general	10,397
Staff travel and accommodation	7,598
Website	3,470
Professional fees	2,750
Insurance	2,230
	<u>339,585</u>

### EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR

	<u>15,035</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	31,775
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<u><b>\$46,810</b></u>



## LOOKING FORWARD

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

### Partner with us

We are committed to working with organizations large and small to reach youth in communities across Canada. You can also request a CRE team to come into your school or work with your group. Sessions can be tailored to your needs. If you believe in what we do and see an opportunity to collaborate, get in touch with us!

### Spread the word

Tell a friend about what we do. Share our films "Shielded Minds" and "Journey to Oz". Invite CRE to do a workshop. Attend a community event. Get informed. Start the dialogue!

### CRE's STRATEGIC VISION

- Continue to increase youth leadership capacity by expanding our Youth Reconciliation Initiative to more communities. CRE is currently preparing to expand in Northern Ontario by before 2014
- CRE will strengthen relationships with its existing communities and continue to offer exchanges and include youth in other CRE activities
- Increase Intergenerational Community Events led by youth in communities across the country
- Programming will continue to focus on four core activities: exchanges, workshops, Intergenerational Community Events and gatherings and conferences
- Engage younger youth through workshops in elementary schools
- Look for opportunities to expand programming to Quebec

### Donate to Canadian Roots Exchange

CRE is now a registered charity and can issue a tax receipt for eligible donations. Donations can be made by credit card through our website. Donations help support our work and provide more opportunities for youth. You can also donate Aeroplan miles which are used to provide program opportunities to youth from more distant communities who otherwise would not be able to participate. More details and links to make either cash or Aeroplan donations to CRE are provided on our website.



## **Canadian Roots Exchange**

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[canadianroots.ca](http://canadianroots.ca)



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