



Reaching our youth through music, media, trades and Life skills

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James Wilkinson is the Executive Director of Wiidosem Youth Services Incorporated, a grassroots group he founded in 2011 to serve youths in Thunder Bay and in remote northern Indigenous communities. He works with a board of dedicated individuals passionate about engaging children and youth to make a difference. Wiidosem's mandate and goal is to design programs, deliver services and organize activities that can change and save lives.

To this end James became a Certified Oola Life Coach teaching individuals how to balance the 7 most important key areas in life. He is also a Certified Aroma Freedom Technique (AFT) Practitioner. AFT is a non-intrusive technique that teaches how to release negative thoughts and feelings and replace them with positive ones, enabling individuals to better manage their emotions, pursue their dreams and realize their goals.

For thirty years, James has worked with youth through Martial Arts, Music, and Media training. He has gained a wealth of experience from his involvement with the Thunder Bay community including the National Indigenous Peoples Day Planning Committee. He served as an Indigenous Awareness Facilitator for the City of Thunder Bay from 2014 – 2019 working with the Aboriginal Liaison's Office on the Walk-a-Mile Project Team. In this capacity, he facilitated workshops for Police Services, Fire, Superior North EMS, and various social and youth service organizations. He has also performed Indigenous Awareness training for the City of Thunder Bay's new and existing employees until just before the pandemic.

Today, Wiidosem shares space with the Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC), where James assists the youth to develop their talents and enhance their capacity to become the best they can be. He runs a music and arts program at the Multicultural Youth Centre, and has hosted annual Kakina Kwesenag youth talent shows since 2011. Wiidosem's office is at 217 Ray Boulevard, the RMYC Carrick House donated by Kelly and Sarah Carrick to serve as a youth leadership and organizational development safe space for reconciliation. Carrick House is also a sub-office for Youth Centres Canada (YCC), a national organization for groups and individuals working to establish youth drop-in centres as nurturing spaces for kids and teens.

Sharing space with the RMYC and YCC has created opportunities for Wiidosem to expand its network and support young people and their adult allies who want to engage youth in positive activities across Northwestern Ontario and throughout Canada. The generous support from a benefactor in Toronto in 2020, enabled Wiidosem to restructure into a registered non-profit organization soon to become Registered Charity. This will greatly enhance fundraising capabilities to maintain successful activities and sustain best practices.

The vision at Wiidosem is to serve the youth so that they access programs and supports that strengthen their ability to function well in today's society, give them hope to cope in healthy ways, and prepare them for a better and brighter future. They will be empowered to make responsible decisions and wise choices to survive, thrive and be resilient to deal with life's challenges. The process is underway to redesign Wiidosem's Music and Film/Media/Communication programs to reflect this vision, and add Life-skills training, Trade-skills, Cultural Teachings, Character Development, and so forth.

James feels that we can no longer stand by and watch our youths' lights wink out one at a time without doing something to help them. We know in our hearts that when we can change lives we save lives. This is why he created Wiidosem, and to that end has dedicated himself.

For more information on Wiidosem, or youth programming and capacity development supports for children and youth, students as well as community development workers, and the cultural/ racial sensitivity training offered, please contact:

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