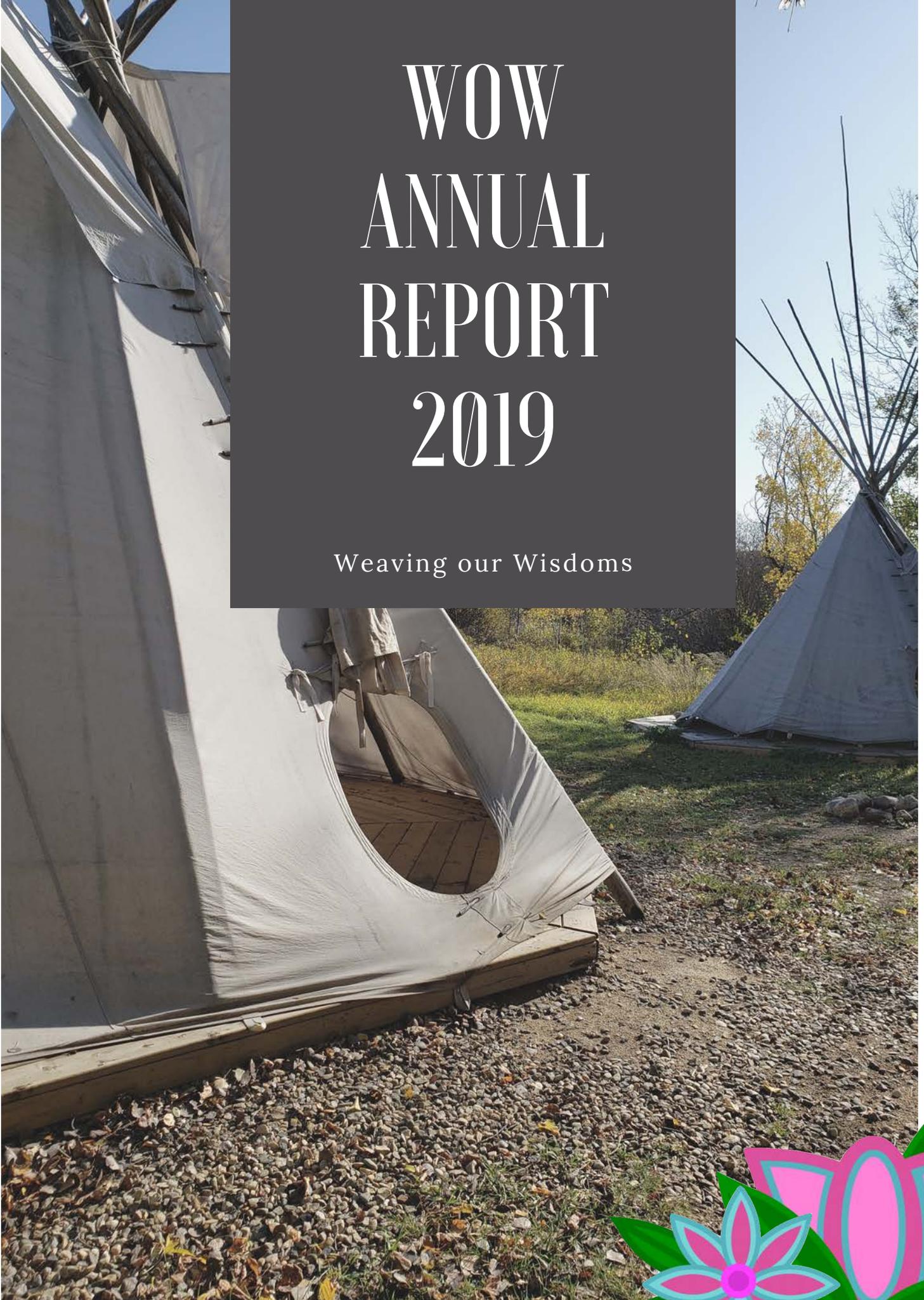


WOW ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Weaving our Wisdoms



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The WoW team acknowledges the land and her teachings, our Elders and their guidance, the HIV Olders and the paths they walk, the participants and their wisdoms, and our partners who strive to practice allyship, working towards horizons of healing, hope, and togetherness.

The flowers on these posters were generously donated by Dené artist Lisa Boivin. Lisa's flowers are always vibrant in colour and energy, reflecting the beauty and resilience of Indigenous culture.

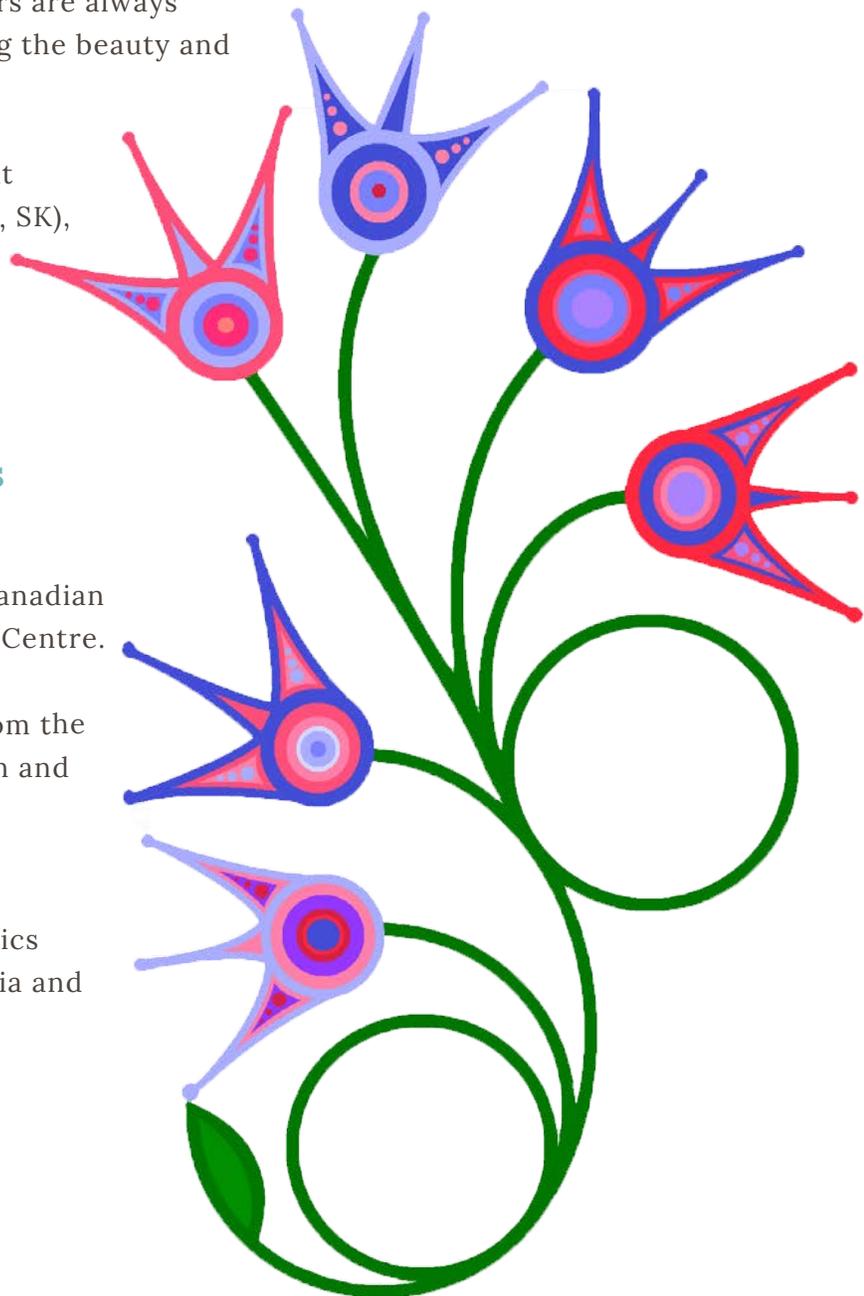
Photos were taken by the WoW team at Wanuskewin Heritage Park (Saskatoon, SK), Koeye Lodge (Bella Bella, BC), Hotel Omni Mont Royal (Montreal, QC), and TCU Place (Saskatoon, SK)

RESEARCH PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

The WoW Study is supported by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network and the AHA Centre.

We have received financial support from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health.

The WoW Study received research ethics approval from the University of Victoria and the University of Toronto.



BACKGROUND

Although there is a growing literature on health and wellness initiatives rooted in teachings on the land, there is little research so far that focuses on the connection between land and HIV and AIDS wellness for Indigenous peoples. The Weaving our Wisdoms (WoW) study is part of an emerging field in health research that holds up Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in living well with HIV to support health and healing.

The WoW study seeks to understand how living well as an Indigenous Person living with HIV (IPHA) is optimized by engaging with teachings and activities rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing from and on the land.

STUDY AIMS

Develop an approach to wellness for IPHAS that is rooted in teachings from and on the land

Investigate research methods that explore how IPHAS understand wellness grounded in teachings from the land

Share the WoW platform to build capacity around how land supports IPHA wellness



2019 IN REVIEW

Weaving our Wisdoms



HIGHLIGHTS

***Please click the titles to travel to our website for access to articles and presentations

May 2019

"I'm here and I'm going to do what I'm going to do: What is an HIV Older?"

Canadian Association for HIV Research Conference

June 2019

Launch of www.weavingourwisdoms.com

July 2019

Ethics approval from the University of Victoria and the University of Toronto

August 2019

"What is an HIV Older: A Mini-CBR Workshop Exploring Land-Based Wellness and the Concept of an HIV Older"

Wise Practices and Skills Building

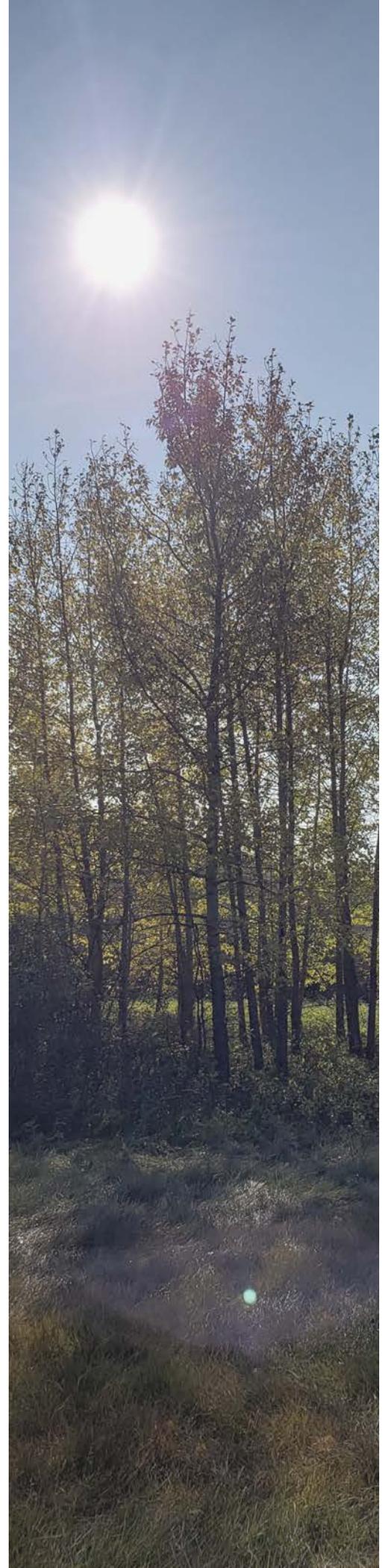
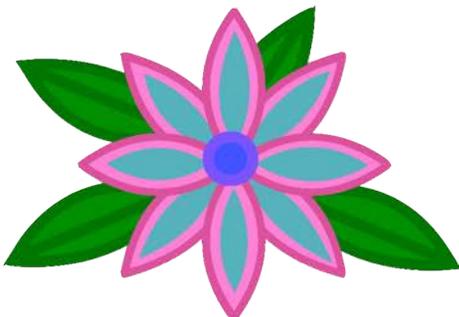
September/October 2019:

The WoW Gathering

December 2019

The WoW Gathering: A Land-Based Positive Action Initiative to Support Indigenous People Living with HIV

The Journal of Indigenous HIV Research



BUILDING OUR BUNDLES

In 2019 we stepped onto the national stage to share the concept of "What is an HIV Older" and advocate for IPHA wellness initiatives rooted in the land.

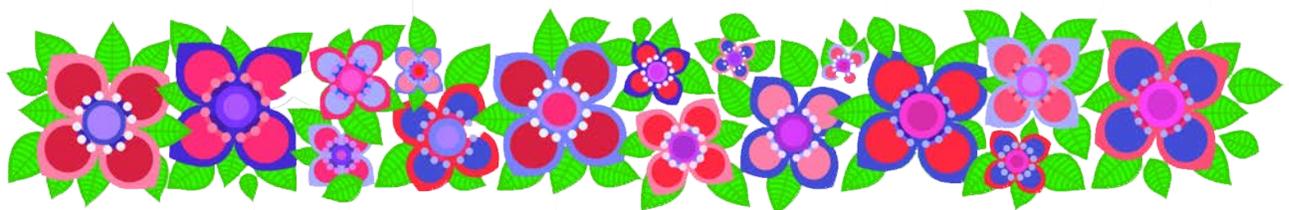
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIV RESEARCH

CAHR 2019, Saskatoon, SK, was a major knowledge sharing event for the WoW Study. We received positive community feedback that we carried forward to create our Gathering bundles.



WANUSKEWIN HERITAGE PARK

Wanuskewin played an integral role in the success of our Gathering. In May, we were welcomed for a visit and a tour, making our planning efforts a breeze.





SKILLS BUILDING 2019

Part of the WoW Study's mandate is capacity building in the area of Indigenous HIV Community-Based Research.

COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Our skills building workshop led participants through a narrated slideshow of beautiful landscape photographs to provide an immersive experience of being "on the land" in our boardroom.

It was so effectively relaxing and healing that some folks were dreamily re-awakened before joining the sharing circle. Our circle, led by two of WoW's Olders, discussed how HIV Olders can play a role in optimizing IPHA wellness by facilitating connections to the land.



CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP THEMES

- Beginning research in a good way
- What is consent?
- What is an HIV Older?
- Being on the land
- Sharing circles and data gathering
- Closing in a good way



THE GATHERING

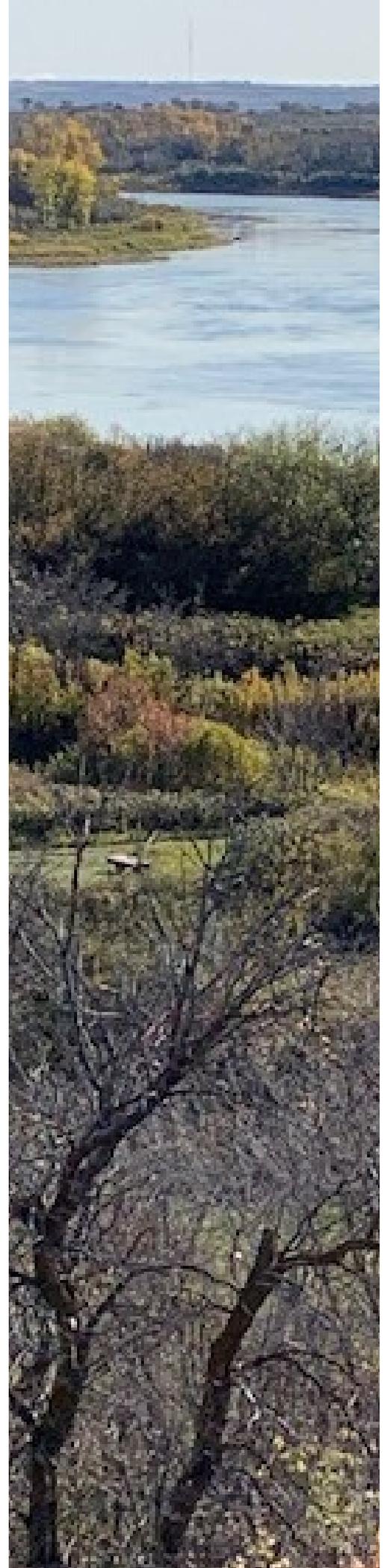
In September, the WoW team grew from 12 people to nearly 30 when we gathered for our first community research retreat in and around Saskatoon, SK.

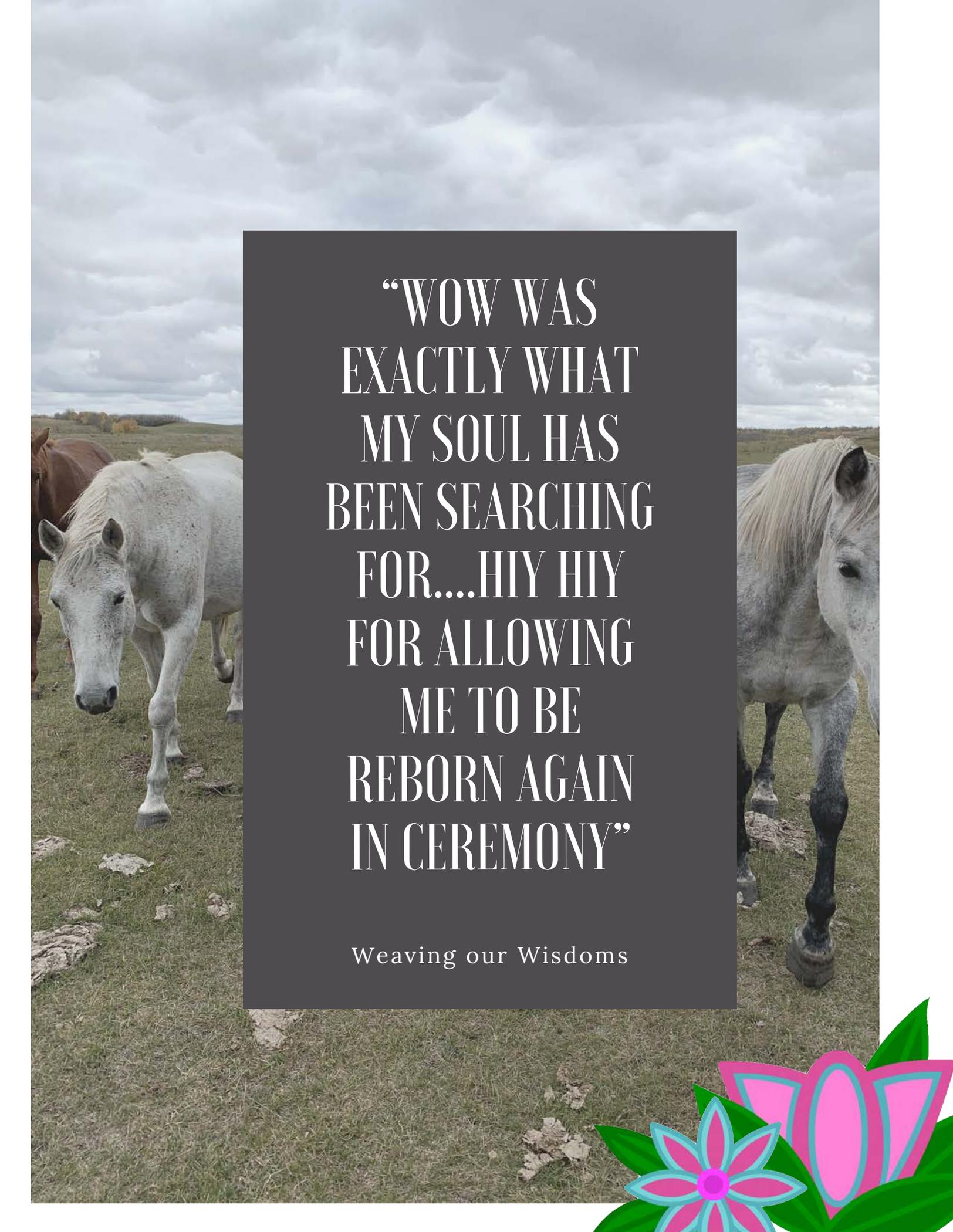
We began our Gathering at the family home of two of WoW's elders, where they held a pipe ceremony, a sweat, and a feast to help us begin in a good way. Some team members took time to wander in the hills, receive some horse and dog therapy, and others helped in the kitchen. This time helped us to reflect on how connecting to the land could influence personal and collective HIV wellness and leadership in the IPHA community.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park welcomed us with the smell of sage and damp grass in our noses. We began by looking across the river valley to get our bearings, before descending into the coulee at the bottom of the bluff. Our guide helped us to (re)live the stories of the people who have been visiting this place for eight thousand years. We filled ourselves with local foods and after gathering around the fire for teachings, we separated to tipis for our sharing circles.

The journey has only begun and after having some time for reflection and respite, we are bringing together the words, stories, and images that were shared at the Gathering to weave a collective voice that continues to advocate for IPHA wellness. This voice strives to honour and carry forward the seven sacred teachings of respect, wisdom, courage, honesty, truth, humility, and love.

~Excerpt from a summary appearing in the [AHA Centre's October Newsblast](#)





“WOW WAS
EXACTLY WHAT
MY SOUL HAS
BEEN SEARCHING
FOR...HIY HIY
FOR ALLOWING
ME TO BE
REBORN AGAIN
IN CEREMONY”

Weaving our Wisdoms