

From the

MARCH 2026

CIRCLE

A Monthly Publication
by Pow Wow Pitch



POW  PITCH



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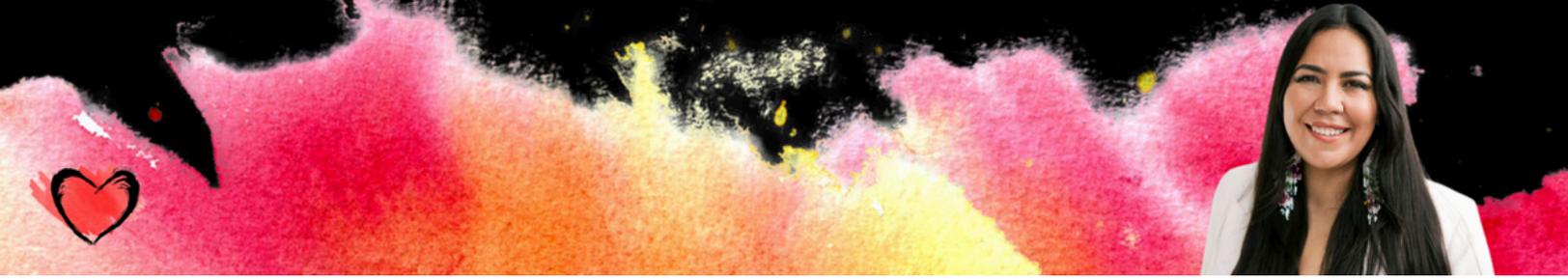
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OPENING THE CIRCLE



A message from the Founder

When Pow Wow Pitch first began, it was rooted in a simple belief: Indigenous entrepreneurs deserve to be seen, supported, and celebrated. What started as a pitch competition has grown into something much larger. It has become a gathering place for ideas, creativity, and empowerment.

Over the years, I have witnessed so many amazing journeys unfold. I have seen entrepreneurs take risks, strengthen their businesses, build community, and define success on their own terms. Behind every pitch is a story. Behind every story is a person. And behind every person is a circle of support.

As an Anishinaabe mother and woman founder, I know firsthand the courage it takes to step forward with an idea and trust in your own vision. Entrepreneurship asks us to lead with confidence even when the path is uncertain. For many Indigenous women, that leadership is deeply connected to family, culture, and responsibility to community.

That is why this month, as we recognize International Women's Day, feels especially meaningful. We celebrate the women who are building businesses, creating opportunity, and shaping the future of Indigenous entrepreneurship. Their strength and determination continue to inspire me and remind me why this work matters.



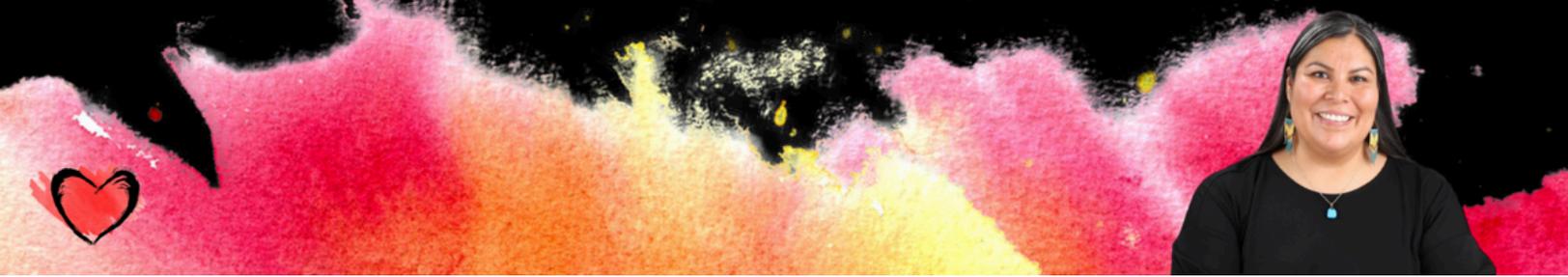
From the Circle is an extension of that spirit. It is a space to gather our stories, reflect on our growth, and stay connected beyond a single moment.

It allows us to share not only what we do, but who we are as a community and how we continue to grow together.

As we launch this first edition, I feel deep gratitude for the entrepreneurs, partners, mentors, and community members who strengthen this work every day. Our Pow Wow Pitch circle continues to expand because of your leadership and belief.

Welcome to the Circle.

Sunshine Tenasco



GATHERING IN A CIRCLE

A message from our Executive Director

As we launch this first edition of **From the Circle**, I want to build on our Founder's reflection with both pride and purpose. What began as a bold idea has grown into a grassroots movement supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs across Turtle Island. Each year, I witness firsthand how the Pow Wow Pitch community continues to evolve, not only in size, but in confidence, connection, and determination.

At Pow Wow Pitch, we often speak about visibility, access, and opportunity. But at the heart of our work is relationship. Entrepreneurship is a courageous journey, and while it can sometimes feel lonely, especially for Indigenous founders, our circle offers a sense of belonging and shared strength. It reminds us that we are never walking this path alone. We are supported by mentors, partners, family, and community, with our cultures and worldviews holding us steady and guiding our growth.

I see the courage, strength, and resilience behind every application submitted, every pitch delivered, and every milestone celebrated. I see entrepreneurs balancing business growth with care, community leadership, and reciprocity. I see innovation grounded in tradition. And I see a generation redefining what Indigenous economic sovereignty looks like.

From the Circle is more than a publication. It is a living archive of our collective progress. It is where we amplify entrepreneur stories, highlight partnerships that move the ecosystem forward, and share insights that strengthen the path for those coming next.

This work is held by many hands and many hearts. It is shaped by a dedicated team, guided by trusted mentors and partners, and enriched by a growing network of alumni who continue to inspire us. Each program we launch is shaped with care and intention, grounded in the belief that Indigenous entrepreneurs deserve to feel supported, encouraged, and uplifted at every stage of their journey.

As we move into this year's programming, we do so with love and fun. We are excited to welcome new entrepreneurs into the circle and to continue walking alongside those who have been with us from the beginning.

We look forward to what this year will bring.



Naomi Sarazin, Executive Director



WITHIN THE CIRCLE

WOMEN BEHIND THE WORK

International Women's Day recognizes the leadership, strength, and care women bring to every space. At Pow Wow Pitch, this work is carried forward by women who believe deeply in community, opportunity, and creating spaces where Indigenous entrepreneurs can thrive.



NAOMI SARAZIN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

International Women's Day is a reminder of the incredible strength, wisdom, and care that women bring to every part of life. For me, it's a day to honour the women who came before me and paved the way. It's also a moment to reflect on the responsibility and joy of carrying that same spirit forward for the next generation. It's about creating space for women to lead with confidence and celebrating them every day, because we are the ones who hold our families and communities together, ensuring the next generation sees what is possible.



KEISHA PERRIN PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

International Women's Day celebrates the women who break cycles, challenge barriers, and create new possibilities for the next generation. It honours the mothers, daughters, sisters, mentors, and leaders who show through courage and action that every dream is within reach.

Leadership does not begin with a title; it begins within. Every voice and every step forward matters. Today, we celebrate the strength, resilience, and limitless potential of women everywhere. Keep leading. Keep believing. Keep breaking cycles.



DESTINY MALUGA COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

International Women's Day is about showing up as we are. Not as a version of ourselves that feels perfect or polished. We are often taught that leadership means doing it all, carrying everything, and never slowing down. I believe there is just as much power in honesty, vulnerability, and allowing ourselves to lead in ways that feel grounded and real. When women show up fully as themselves, with their values, boundaries, and lived experiences, it creates space for others to do the same.



IN THE CIRCLE: PODCAST LAUNCH

Lead From Within Featuring Robyn Soulier-Ritchot

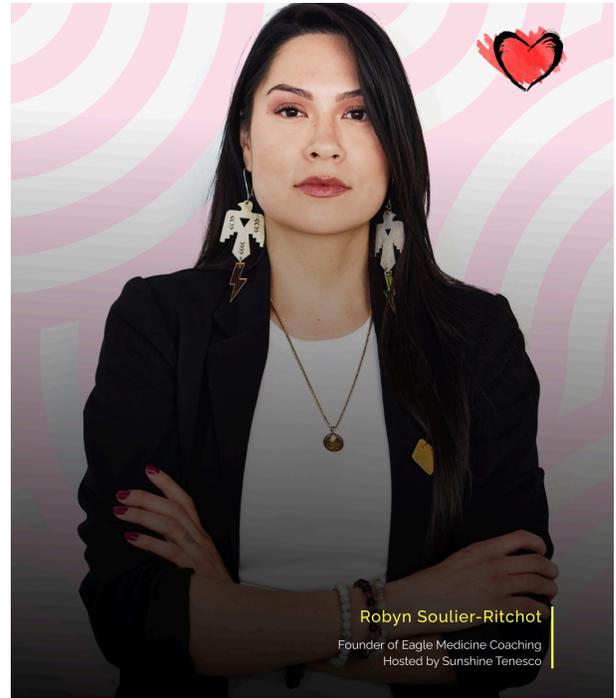
The 2026 season of the Pow Wow Pitch Podcast opens with a powerful reminder that leadership begins from within.

In our season launch episode, we are joined by Robyn Soulier-Ritchot, Founder of Eagle Medicine Coaching and Consulting and a 2025 Pow Wow Pitch semi finalist. Robyn's journey into entrepreneurship was not linear. It was shaped by lived experience, sobriety, motherhood, and a deep ancestral lineage of healers. What once felt like hardship became the foundation of her work.

The name Eagle Medicine came to Robyn through a prophetic dream of an eagle standing on a mountaintop. For her, it symbolized clarity, perspective, and spiritual guidance. Today, her work supports Indigenous youth and community leaders in building purpose driven lives rooted in emotional balance and self awareness.

Throughout the conversation, Robyn speaks openly about burnout, compassion, and the distinction between basic self care and wellness as strategy. Sustainable leadership, she reminds us, requires tending to the inner work as seriously as the outer work.

As we recognize International Women's Day this month, Robyn's story reflects the strength of Indigenous women who lead with honesty,



resilience, and purpose. Her message is clear. This work cannot continue without community, and we cannot pour from an empty cup.

The 2026 season of the Pow Wow Pitch Podcast is now live, with new episodes released the first Wednesday of each month throughout the year.

Listen at powwowpitch.org/podcast.





AROUND THE CIRCLE

MARCH REFLECTIONS



International Women's Day

This month, we recognize International Women's Day and celebrate the strength, leadership, and vision of Indigenous women across our communities. At Pow Wow Pitch, we see firsthand the influence of women who are building businesses, mentoring others, and creating opportunity for the next generation. Their leadership is rooted in culture, perseverance, and care for community. We honour their work not only on one day, but throughout the year.

World Water Day

On World Water Day, we reflect on the importance of clean, accessible water for all communities. Our founder, Sunshine Tenasco, has been recognized as a Water Leader by Ottawa Riverkeeper for her advocacy and commitment to safe drinking water. Through Her Braids and her book Nibi's Water Song, she continues to raise awareness about water protection and the responsibility we all share to care for future generations. Water sustains life, and protecting it is an act of leadership.



AROUND THE CIRCLE

MARCH REFLECTIONS



National Indigenous Languages Day

Indigenous Languages Day

Language carries history, identity, and connection. As we recognize Indigenous Languages Day on March 31, we celebrate the languages that connect us to those who came before us and continue to shape who we are. Language is not only a way of speaking, but a way of seeing and understanding the world.

We invite our community to share how you say hello in your language. Submissions will be featured in our social media platforms in celebration of National Indigenous Languages Day.

Click the button to submit your greeting and your Nation or community. Let us continue to keep our languages strong and spoken within the circle.

[**Share Your Greeting**](#)



IN MOTION

OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CIRCLE



Pitch Program: Info-Session & Live Auditions

In partnership with ADAWE Indigenous Business Hub, Pow Wow Pitch will host a full day dedicated to the 2026 Indigenous Business Pitch Competition on April 10, 2026. The day begins with an Information Session, offered both in person and online, where prospective applicants can learn about eligibility, key dates, and what to expect throughout the pitch process. Immediately following, entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to participate in Live Auditions and pitch in person. Registration is required for the Information Session, and the same registration form and Zoom link will be used for both virtual and in person attendees. Full details will be shared upon registration.

Event Details:

- Date: April 10, 2026
- Info-Session Time: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET
- Live Auditions Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. ET
- Location: Online or In-Person
- In-Person Address: ADAWE Indigenous Business Hub | 338 Somerset Street W., Ottawa, ON
- Virtual Access: Zoom link provided after registration

Registration Link: <https://forms.fillout.com/t/woz1Upgxm4us>

Click here to Register!





BUILDING TOGETHER

PARTNER UPDATES



Partner Announcements

Over the coming months, we are excited to formally announce our 2026 partners who are joining us in strengthening Indigenous entrepreneurship across Turtle Island. Each partnership reflects a shared commitment to access, opportunity, and supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs in building thriving businesses within their communities.

Pow Wow Pitch works alongside organizations that believe in supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs through mentorship, visibility, funding, and strategic collaboration. Our partners help remove barriers, expand access to networks and capital, and ensure that our programming continues to evolve and grow each year. We are proud to begin sharing confirmed partnerships for 2026.

February Announcements

RBC Three-Year Collaboration

In February, Pow Wow Pitch announced a three-year collaboration with RBC as Co-Presenter across all programming from 2026 to 2028, building on a longstanding relationship that has supported Indigenous entrepreneurs since the early years. This long term commitment strengthens support for Indigenous entrepreneurs through mentorship, educational programming, judging participation, and continued support of the Indigenous Entrepreneur Awards, celebrating excellence, leadership, and achievement among Indigenous business owners.

Carleton University | Strengthening Communications Strategy

Pow Wow Pitch also partnered with Carleton University's Sprott Student Consulting Group to strengthen our communications strategy for organizational growth. Through research and strategic recommendations, this collaboration helps us amplify the stories, journeys, and businesses of Indigenous entrepreneurs, refine storytelling, and expand our reach.

Read more about our partnership announcements at powwowpitch.org/stories.



BUILDING TOGETHER

PARTNER UPDATES



5 Steps to Help Win Business Grants and Government Funding in 2026

The recent federal budget introduced a suite of new funding programs for businesses designed to fuel innovation, growth and competitiveness. Here's a practical framework to help business owners approach grants more strategically and to use them to support long-term growth.

Learn More: [Click here.](#)

[Learn More](#)





BUILDING TOGETHER

PARTNER UPDATES

mastercard.ca/smallbusiness'."/>

Applications are now open for the **Mastercard Small Business Fund**.

Apply at mastercard.ca/smallbusiness

Applications are open for the Mastercard Small Business Fund

Calling all female small business owners! Applications for the Mastercard Small Business Fund are now open. Now in its fourth year, this initiative is part of Mastercard's ongoing support of the small business community in Canada and is designed to support female entrepreneurs by offering ten grants of \$10,000 CAD each, along with tailored mentorship and access to business growth resources. Selected recipients will also receive mentorship from industry experts, digital tools to support growth, and an in-person Priceless Experience in Toronto.

You don't want to miss your shot! Applications are open until March 24.

Link to applications: [Click here.](#)

[Link to Applications](#)





BUILDING TOGETHER

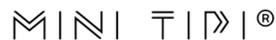
PARTNERS

Our work is made possible through the support of partners who share our commitment to strengthening Indigenous entrepreneurship. Learn more about our partners at powwowpitch.org/partners.

CO-PRESENTING



FRIENDS



COMMUNITY





BECOME A PARTNER

PARTNERS

Pow Wow Pitch is looking for capital support to help us achieve our vision of **\$1 million to 100 Indigenous entrepreneurs.**

Your Partnership helps Indigenous entrepreneurs transform ideas into thriving businesses by:



Funding grants
& awards



Supporting mentorship
& training



Growing sustainable
Indigenous businesses



Amplifying
Indigenous stories



Empowering the
next generation

Why Partner With Pow Wow Pitch?

NATIONAL REACH

Over a decade of programming supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs across Canada.

TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

Strong connections with founders, youth, and community partners.

YEAR-ROUND VISIBILITY

Recognition across live events, digital campaigns, podcasts, and publications.

AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities to mentor, judge, host, or collaborate beyond brand placement.

Start the Conversation.

There's more than one way to partner. We welcome contributions of all kinds, grounded in generosity, reciprocity, and a shared commitment to uplift Indigenous entrepreneurs. Let's start the conversation and explore what partnership could look like together.

Email: hello@powwowpitch.org

Become a Partner!



JOIN THE CIRCLE

SHARE YOUR STORY



Alumni Stories & Community Leadership

Pow Wow Pitch does not end at the pitch stage. Our alumni continue to lead, build, and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways. As our network grows, we want to create space to highlight where you are now and how your journey continues to unfold.

Are you mentoring others? Providing support in your community? Growing in new ways as a leader? We invite Pow Wow Pitch alumni to share updates, reflections, and stories of community leadership.

Selected submissions may be featured in future editions of From the Circle, on our website, and across our social platforms. By sharing your story, you help strengthen the network and inspire entrepreneurs who are just beginning their journey.

Your story remains part of this circle.

Submit Your Story Here!



WHO WE ARE

Pow Wow Pitch is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting and funding early-stage Indigenous entrepreneurs across Turtle Island, with the co-presenting support of RBC and Mastercard.

STAY IN THE CIRCLE

Questions, partnership inquiries, or story submissions?

Email us at hello@powwowpitch.org

Website

powwowpitch.org

Follow Us

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OUR TEAM

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POW (WOW) PITCH

