Our First Anishinaabe Arts Initiative Fellowship is Awarded!

On April 07, 2017, the Anishinaabe Arts Council came together to review 9 applications for our very 1st AAI Fellowship award. After discussion and review of each applicant’s artistic quality, merit, and project proposal, bead-worker Thomas Stillday of Ponemah was named our very first AAI Fellow and awarded $5,000 at our Arts Expo on April 29, 2017.

Thomas Stillday has been doing beadwork for 35 years, since he learned from his mother, father, and grandmother. He has gained a reputation in the region as a very gifted beadwork artist for his exquisite designs, his brilliant use of color and texture in blending both modern and antique style beads, and in his superb attention to detail in both his stitching and in the way he covers the entire surface of the bag with beads.

He says of his own work “I was born to bead. From a very early age I traveled to powwows with my family and was always checking out other people’s beadwork and had a burning desire inside me to create and design my own work. I come from a family of beading artists who taught me how to sew and bead with great pride, good feelings and to create the best work that I am able to do. I am constantly pushing myself as an artist to design distinctive Ojibwe patterns that let others know my tribal affiliation through my beadwork. I am proud to represent my culture.”